Cricket Second Test: New Zealand v England

Kiwis bowled over by rampant Gough

Paul Weaver in Wellington

DARREN GOUGH, with a devastating spell which brought him four wickets in 21 balls for only 10 runs, gave England the platform for their first Test victory overseas for two years on Monday. Andy Caddick then polished off the New Zealand tail with the final two wickets after lunch as England won by an innings and 68 runs.

Earlier on the final morning England had been frustrated by bad weather, stubborn batting and some good fortune, and at lunch New Zealand, who had started the last day on 125 for four, were 177 for eight.

The weather forecast was as good as its gloomy word and play started half an hour late. Blair Pocock, 45 not out overnight, finally reached his 50, but when he was on 54 he was the beneficiary of a remarkable piece of luck. He attempted to sweep Croft but failed to make contact and the ball rebounded from his pads on to the base of the off-stump. But the bails, heavier than normal because of the windy conditions, did not come off.

After 81 overs, with the score 147 for four, England took the new ball. It was shared between Caddick and Dominic Cork. But after five overs, with the score on 161, Gough replaced Cork at the Scoreboard End.

The move produced immediate dividends. With his fourth delivery, and after 50 minutes' play, Gough bowled the New Zealand captain Lee Germon for 11, the ball dribbling on to his stumps via the inside edge. With the second delivery of his next over Gough had Pocock caught at second slip by Nick Knight. New Zealand were 164 for six and Pocock's defiant innings had lasted five hours, 38 minutes.

Gough continued with the mayhem. At 175 he had Nathan Astle athletically caught by Alec Stewart, diving to his right, and two balls later had Simon Doull caught by Knight at second slip. He finished with match figures of nine for 92.

Thanks to Croft's remarkable late mini-spell of three wickets in 14 balls, New Zealand had ended the fourth day still 134 runs behind.

The Glamorgan all-rounder is one of the most determined and engaging members of this England squad. But he has sometimes lacked penetration with his off-spin at this level and was left out of the Auckland Test in favour of Craig White, a decision later regretted by the tour management.

On Sunday, after the start had been delayed almost five hours, Croft looked the most dangerous of the England bowlers. "When I bowl I always expect to take wickets. The bonus today was the way we fielded," he said.

But the penultimate day was mostly one of frustration for the England players. Agreed starting times of 11.15 and 2.15 were abandoned because of persistent showers and it was 3.15 when play finally got under way with a minimum of 49 overs to bowl. The ground staff showed little urgency in preparing for play.

England started the match well, dismissing the home side for 124, with only Patel and Astle offering any resistance against the pace attack of Gough and Caddick. Although the tourists lost the early wicket of Knight, they soon took control of the game.

Atherton, Stewart and Hussain provided useful partnerships to overhaul New Zealand's modest total. Thorpe and Crawley then set about the task of building a commanding total. Thorpe, who was ultimately out for 108, scoring the only century of the Test, was later named Man of the Match.



End in sight . . . Darren Gough celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's captain Lee Germon PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE MASON

Scoreboard

NEW ZEALAND: first innings

B A Young c Stewart b Gough	8
B A Pocock c Cork b Caddick	6
A C Parore c Stewart b Gough	4
S P Fleming c & b Caddick	1
N J Astle c Croft b Gough	36
C L Cairns c Hussain b Gough	3
L K Germon c Stewart b Caddick	10
D N Patel c Cork b Caddick	45
S B Doull c Stewart b Gough	0
G I Allott c Knight b Cork	1
D L Vettori not out	3
Extras (lb5, nb2)	7
Total (48.4 overs)	124

Bowling: Cork 14-4-34-1, Caddick 18.3-5-45-4, Gough 16-6-40-5.

ENGLAND: first innings

N V Knight c Patel b Doull	8
M A Atherton lbw b Doull	30
A J Stewart c Fleming b Allott	52
N Hussain c Young b Vettori	64
G P Thorpe st Germon b Patel	108
J P Crawley c Germon b Doull	56
D G Cork lbw b Astle	7
R D B Croft c Fleming b Doull	0
D Gough c Fleming b Doull	18
A R Caddick c Allott b Vettori	20
P C R Tufnell not out	6
Extras (b3, lb9, nb2)	14
Total (137.3 overs)	383

Bowling: Doull 28-10-75-5, Allott 31-6-91-1; Vettori 34.3-10-98-2, Cairns 4-2-8-0; Astle 14-6-30-1, Patel 24-4-59-1, Pocock 2-0-10-0.

NEW ZEALAND: second innings

B A Pocock c Knight b Gough	64
B A Young c Stewart b Tufnell	56
A C Parore lbw b Croft	15
S P Fleming c & b Croft	0
D N Patel lbw b Croft	0
L K Germon b Gough	11
N J Astle c Stewart b Gough	4
C L Cairns c Knight b Caddick	22
S B Doull c Knight b Gough	0
G I Allott b Caddick	2
D L Vettori not out	2
Extras (b5, lb4, nb6)	15
Total (108.2 overs)	191

Bowling Cork 10-1-42-0, Caddick 27.2-11-40-2, Croft 20-10-19-3, Gough 23-9-52-4, Tufnell 24-9-29-1

England won by an innings and 68 runs

Cryptic crossword by Mercury

Across

1 One has a big bill for food! (7)
5 Pheasant exercises with a fellow bird (7)
9 A glum sort of timber supplier (5)
10 A passing manager? (9)
11 Awkward copper wants decoration Morse refused (10)
12 Turned up two students with pluck (4)
14 About to enter coach and hold up attendant (11)
18 Confine inside vehicle and create havoc (11)
21 Border on a bath back (4)
22 Coal worker wants the car I abandoned (10)
25 In place of Rule E, admittedly stranger (9)
26 Wind caused by having an alcoholic drink after tea, say (5)
27 Dane's ramshackle vessel comes to grief (7)
28 Angry about storm, object (7)

Down

1 Spot one going in for some fish (6)
2 Vegetable glue mixed with mercury (6)
3 How, in France, wary head waiter leaves explanatory notes (10)
4 Calls about this morning's points (5)
5 I pay Norma to dance — it's madness! (9)
6 Against accepting help is very keen (4)
7 Something said about one being late? (8)
8 Left peer and introduced host (8)
13 Patron from France to be replaced (10)
15 Write a number when going round a mountain range (9)
16 They have what it takes to eat in high places (8)
17 Got a cupboard, empty, to hold 24 sheets (8)
19 Excellent fish when in poor health (6)
20 Fed up, having to stop on guard (6)
23 Husky-sounding animal (5)
24 Penalty incurred if turning up before half-nine (4)

Last week's solution

FA wins World Cup reprieve

Neil Robinson

THE Football Association last week scored a surprise victory in its battle to host the 2006 World Cup when Uefa, soccer's governing body in Europe, announced last week that it was no longer backing Germany as Europe's preferred bidder.

Any European country wishing to stage the tournament will now be invited to put its case before Uefa's executive committee meeting in April.

The announcement came after talks between the FA and Uefa officials in London. Uefa had earlier infuriated the FA by sending a fax saying it was backing Germany.

The FA's chief executive, Graham Kelly, confirmed that England could decide to go it alone with a direct bid to Fifa, the world governing body which will decide on the eventual venue, if it is unhappy with Uefa's selection process.

He said, "This process will be designed to set up an internal bidding process within Uefa. If we are happy with that process then we will subscribe to it. If we are not, we won't."

Football Results

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE First Division Barnsley 1, Port Vale 0; Birminghm 0, Portsmth 3; Crystal Palace 3, Bradford 1; Huddersfield 0, Wolverhampton 2; Ipswich 2, QPR 0; Manchester City 3, Southend 0; Oldham 0, Grimsby 3; Reading 3, Bolton 2; Sheff Utd 2, Norwich 3; WBA 1, Swindon 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Bolton (played 32-points 64); 2, Wolverhampton (31-56); 3, Barnsley (30-54).

Second Division Blackpool 5, Peterboro 1; Brentford 1, Watford 1; Burnley 1, York 2; Bury 2, Bournemth 1; Chesterfld 0, Wrexham 0; Gillingham 1, Bristol Rovers 0; Luton 2, Plymouth 2; Rotherham 0, Preston 1; Shrewsbury 2, Notts Co 1; Walsall 2, Millwall 1; Wycombe 2, Crewe 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Brentford (30-56); 2, Luton (28-52); 3, Bristol City (30-48).

Third Division Barnet 2, Hereford 3; Brighton 5, Hartlepool 0; Cambridge 1, Hull 0; Cardiff 1, Colchester 2; Chester 6, Doncaster 0; Exeter 0, Rochdale 0; Lincoln 2, Fulham 0; Northmptn 1, Swansea 2, Scarboro 4, Darlington 1; Sc'thorpe 0, Mansfield 2; Wigan 1, Carlisle 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Wigan (30-59); 2, Fulham (31-59); 3, Carlisle (29-56).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE Premier Division Dundee Utd 0, Hibernian 0; Dunfrmline 0, Rangers 3; Hearts 2, Kilmarnk 0; Motherwell 2, Aberdeen 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (26-64); 2, Celtic (25-57); 3, Dundee Utd (26-43).

First Division East Fife 1, Clydebank 2; Partick 0, St Mirren 0; Stirling A 0, Dundee 1; St Johnstn 2, Airdrie 2. **Leading positions:** 1, St Johnstone (26-57); 2, Dundee (26-44); 3, Partick (26-41).

Second Division Ayr 3, Clyde 1; Brechin 0, Stranraer 0; Dumbarton 2, Livingston 3; Hamilton 4, Berwick 1; Queen Sth 2, Stenhsmr 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Ayr (24-54); 2, Livingston (24-49); 3, Hamilton (23-44).

Third Division Alloa 1, Cowdnbth 0; Arbroath 0, Albion 1; Forfar 0, Ross Co 1; Inverness 3, E Stirling 2; Queens Pk 0, Montrose 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Inverness (22-47); 2, Ross Co (23-40); 3, Forfar (23-30).

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Palestine asks to join Commonwealth

Ian Black

IN AN extraordinary compliment to the Commonwealth, Palestine, still struggling for statehood, is exploring the prospects of joining the not so exclusive ex-colonial club headed by the Queen, the Guardian has learned.

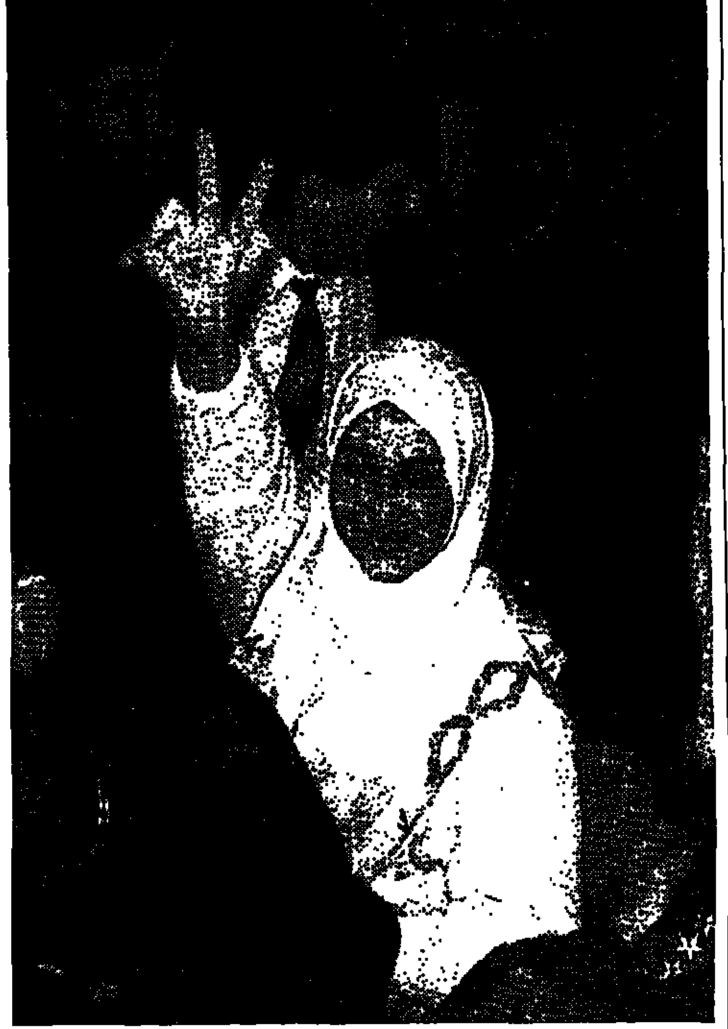
With a formal bid for membership by Yemen already on the table for the organisation's Edinburgh summit in October, Yasser Arafat — the president of a country once ruled unhappily by Britain — could also find his place in the sun, diplomats confirmed on Monday.

But it may be too early for the Palestinian leader to line up with the Commonwealth's 51 heads of government. A Palestinian claim, based on Britain's 30-year responsibility for the then mandated territory, is weakened by the fact that the vital issue of independence is undecided in negotiations with Israel.

Afif Safieh, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's London ambassador, held talks last week with the Commonwealth secretary general, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, and heard that future membership was certainly possible. He was told that the question of "Palestine not being an independent state was not a bar to any discussion of the [membership] issue until independence or sovereignty comes about".

Embarrassed by leaks about these Arabian winds of change, Mr Safieh insisted on Monday that no decision had yet been taken. "This is just an idea that I am exploring," he told the Guardian. "We have excellent relations with all Commonwealth countries and it will enhance our interaction with the international system."

Many Commonwealth members had recognised the unilateral Palestinian declaration of independence in 1988, and most favoured Palestine's eventual independence, he added.



A Palestinian women prisoner arrives in Ramallah after she was freed from an Israeli prison last week PHOTOGRAPH: KHALED ZIGHARI

Yemen's bid, on the face of it, looks stronger. The country, or rather the Aden Protectorate, was ruled by Britain from 1829 until the withdrawal from east of Suez in 1967, and it is now a fully independent country.

Yet there are doubts: "Yemen was far less touched by British culture than Palestine, with far fewer Brits on the ground," said Peter Lyon of London University's Institute of Commonwealth Studies. "Yemen is stretching things, but no more than Rwanda, which has shown an active interest, or Mozambique, which joined last year."

● Thirty-one Palestinian women were given a heroic welcome after being released from Israeli prisons. The move was a further step in implementing the Oslo peace accords but was delayed for six months because the women insisted on coming out together.

Koreas face crisis over 'defection'

Jane Macartney in Beijing and John Gittings

SOUTH KOREA urged "extraordinary alertness" against rival North Korea this week, warning that the defection of a senior North Korean official now marooned in Seoul's Beijing embassy showed the hermit state was unstable.

As China reinforced security at the South Korean embassy on Tuesday, there was little sign of progress in the diplomatic deadlock with the two Koreas on what to do with Hwang Jang-yop, the most senior North Korean to betray his communist homeland. It was Mr Hwang's seventh day in Seoul's consulate office.

Appeals for calm from China, an unwilling third party in the crisis between an old communist ally and a new capitalist friend, appeared to yield fruit as North Korea showed signs of backing off from its earlier hard line over the defection.

The South Korean prime minister, Lee Soo-sung, called for "extraordinary alertness". "The defection of Secretary Hwang Jang-yop, who belongs to the core force of the North Korean leadership, vividly displays the shaking of the ideological foundation that has supported the North Korean system amid economic disasters," he said.

Mr Hwang, one of 11 powerful secretaries of the ruling Workers' Party along with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, sought refuge at Seoul's mission in the Chinese capital on Wednesday last week.

While repeating its appeals for calm, China was prepared for disturbances. Police guarding the embassy where Mr Hwang is stranded went on higher alert, and three armoured personnel carriers filled with helmeted paramilitary police rumbled into the diplomatic quarters to back up squads of police armed with assault rifles.

"We hope all parties can deal with this matter . . . and calmly face and appropriately handle this incident to maintain peace and stability in the Korean peninsula," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said.

The North has hinted it may accept Mr Hwang's defection, saying it would dismiss him if he sought asylum. "It is certain North Korea is changing its attitude," said Kim Kyung-woong, an official of Seoul's state South-North Dialogue Office.

North Korea's foreign ministry said on Monday it would fire Mr Hwang if he sought asylum in Seoul but warned of "decisive countermeasures" if it were proved he had been kidnapped. Pyongyang had earlier maintained that South Korea kidnapped Mr Hwang, architect of the North's governing ideology of Juche, or strict self-reliance. Seoul called the charge preposterous.

Mr Hwang was returning from a 10-day visit to Japan to attend a conference on Juche, where he spoke openly of Pyongyang's economic difficulties and quoted Kim Jong-il directly on plans to take over formally from his father later this year. Mr Kim has still not filled the position of Korean Workers' Party leader, arousing speculation about factional infighting in Pyongyang.

Meanwhile North Korean secret agents have been accused of gunning down a defector in the South as a birthday present for Mr Kim. Lee Han-young was in a critical state this week after being shot in a Seoul suburb by two unknown gunmen last Saturday. Witnesses said he uttered the words "spy, spy" before sinking into a coma.

Seoul police are working on the theory that North Korea had ordered the assassination attempt on Mr Lee in revenge for last week's defection.

Asylum seekers win right to benefits

Alan Travis

THE UK government's 18-month battle to withdraw state aid from most asylum seekers ended in defeat in the Court of Appeal this week after Britain's most senior judges declared that their plight "can and should provoke deep sympathy".

Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, with two colleagues ruled that local authorities were under a legal duty dating back to the 1945 Labour government to provide warmth, food and shelter for 3,000 asylum seekers who would otherwise now be left destitute.

The three judges upheld a High Court ruling last October that an asylum seeker lawfully in the UK under the 1948 National Assistance Act should not be left "destitute, starving, and at risk of illness and even death".

The Department of Health and the three councils that brought the case, Westminster, Lambeth, and Hammersmith and Fulham, were refused permission to appeal to the House of Lords.

Jerry Clore, solicitor for the unnamed asylum seekers in the case, said he hoped that Monday's ruling had finally settled the question.

More than 15,000 asylum seekers have been affected by the withdrawal of benefits, which first took effect more than a year ago.

It has taken four separate court rulings and the enactment of emergency legislation before the Government abandoned the promise made at the 1995 Conservative party conference by the Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley, to wipe out welfare benefit support for 70 per cent of asylum seekers while their cases are resolved, in order to save £200 million a year.

The Department of Health is preparing to pay local authorities more than £40 million to cover some of the costs of feeding and housing asylum seekers left destitute as a result. And £40 million a year is to be made available to cover future costs.

Reacting to the appeal court ruling, Nick Hardwick, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "Once again the judges have drawn the line at leaving people to starve. The Government's policy is in tatters and local authorities have been left to deal with the mess."

He said a legal ban on paying money to the asylum seekers had led to one case where an asylum seeker had walked four miles from Hounslow, west London, to Vauxhall in central London, simply to be fed at the Refugee Council centre.

The appeal was brought on behalf of four unnamed asylum seekers, fleeing from Iraq, China, Algeria and Romania, who are not entitled to social security benefits, are not allowed to work in Britain, have no family or friends in the UK, speak little or no English, and have no other means of support.

Westminster council said it was dismayed by the judgment and argued that supporting asylum seekers was not a duty that should rest on local authorities.

Prison watch, page 8
Comment, page 12

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Mothers must resist pressures of the market

ANNE KARPF (Vegetables matter, February 2) describes a society where family relationships are increasingly conducted through the medium of the "market". Her particular concern is the powerlessness of mothers to withstand the pressures placed on them by their children. The whole article admits to an abdication by women of their responsibilities as parents. As mothers are obviously not being forced to conform to demands made by their children, then why are they giving in to these influences?

The opportunity to have a greater presence in the employment market is regarded by many as an important benefit of equal rights and the "liberation" of women. Many women have enthusiastically followed this path of "liberation" and are undeterred by having children. The additional role of mother adds to the challenge of remaining in work and enhances their status as women. This mark of "progress" has had the concomitant effect of defining the rights of children in consumer and market terms.

Women aiming to be good mothers talk about having access to "good quality and affordable childcare", nursery education, afterschool services — more institutional care for their children. Another option is to advertise for a stranger to look after the very young child, as a low-wage job. The baby cannot speak, so the mother has to take on trust that the "job" is being well done.

Is it all that surprising to discover that we are producing "market" children? Fashion foods, toys and clothes are a logical development. From an early age, children recognise the role they play in the "market" and fit in accordingly. Such mothers have little spare time to spend with their children, so it is less tiring just to give in to their demands. For socially inclined mothers, it is easier on the conscience to blame others, the undoubtedly powerful food manufacturers, the advertisers, television, other people's children, and pretend one is powerless.

What is the solution? If you recognise yourself as a market mother, then put up with the logical result of your behaviour, and stop trying to have things both ways. If, however, you are concerned, then do make an effort. Share your life, yourself, your views, with your children. If you give your children time, material substitutes are unnecessary. If demands are made for fashion goods, then discuss the issues with your children. Allowing a seven-year-old see a film about battery hens, and explaining that this is why you are not keen to buy chicken nuggets, may bring a different response from your child. If discussion and reasoned argument are encouraged as soon as children are able to talk and participate, they will respond well.

Children are the most deprived and helpless group in society. We have to question our behaviour and our part in making society what it is.
Pamela Bartlett,
Asnières sur Blour, France

OH DEAR, so it is automatically the woman's fault (Working mums blamed for children's failures, February 9). A better title and more useful research might have centred on "working parents" and how to reconcile two careers and a family.

That all-important person to welcome the kids home from school and take an interest in what they have done could presumably be mum or dad (or granny or grandpa?), so there are a thousand solutions other than stopping mums working full-time outside the home — flexible hours so one parent can be there; dad staying at home; back to the extended family.
Timothy Foster,
La Rippe, Switzerland

LUKE HARDING failed to note that all failed children had in common full-time working fathers. No analysis was presented regarding the effect of their overtime commitments on their offspring's exam results.
Keren Witcombe,
Perth, Australia

Those in peril on the sea

THERE has been a nasty, monetarist twist to letters regarding the saving of yachtsmen Thierry Dubois and Tony Bullimore from drowning at sea (February 2). The tradition of saving people from the sea is derived from the sailors who do it, the lifeboat men and their colleagues throughout history. During two world wars we never complained that our army was paid to kill enemy soldiers while sailors (of both sides) were paid to save enemy seamen from ships that had been destroyed.

This irreproachable tradition would never have grown up among landlubbers. Everyone at sea knows that the real enemies are the elements. Seamen consider only the human worth of those they save, knowing that some time soon their own lives may be at the mercy of the same elements.

Your letters ignore this shared humanity between all those at sea. Please, no more letters on this from landlubbers or accountants, however well-intentioned. The joy of saving a life from drowning lies in the honour of all those who preserve this ancient tradition.
Sam Micklem,
Captain (retired) of SS Periwinkle,
Lake Derwentwater, Cumbria

EVERY TIME I flew a single engine aircraft over the Mediterranean Sea from Corsica to France I was obliged to sign up to refund eventual costs for search-and-rescue operations. How about introducing the same for solo yacht races, Alpine exploits etc?
Petr Rada,
Fuerth, Germany

Stripping the environment

TOM BRYSON (Wail of the lonesome pine, January 19) says that "The Ontario government is focusing firmly on human economic needs" in turning Ontario's last old-growth pine forests into industrial logging sites.

"Focusing firmly on human economic needs" is hardly the issue. The Ontario "conservative" government has also:

☐ gutted the monitoring and scientific staffs of the province's developed forest management;
☐ abolished government inspections and procedures that ensured the mining industry cleaned up its waste, thus preventing environmental hazards;
☐ cut funding to conservation authorities by 70 per cent and lakes research and clean-up projects by 50 per cent;
☐ initiated the wholesale reduction of Ontario's regulations on toxic pollution;
☐ clawed back $100 million of government financial support from municipal water and sewage projects and beach clean-ups;
☐ instituted mechanisms for the sell-off of public conservation areas and natural habitats;
☐ slashed all budgets for the enforcement of existing environmental laws;
☐ abandoned funding for the province's blue-box and other recycling programmes;
☐ repealed Planning Act regulations on commercial sprawl across rural land, and abolished regulations protecting lake shorelines for commercial destruction;
☐ eviscerated Ontario's entire environmental review process in the name of "reducing red tape".

The pattern at work here is not "meeting human economic needs". On the contrary, it is another step in a worldwide campaign by business-financed governments to strip public environments for unimpeded profit by private corporations.
(Prof) John McMurtry,
University of Guelph,
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

Captured killer whales at risk

FOR THE first time in more than 10 years, Japanese fishermen have captured orcas with the permission of the Fisheries Agency. This permission is required because these animals are listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The fishermen, from Taiji in Wakayama, captured double the agency's quota of five orcas, but in the face of protests, five of the 10 captured animals have since been released.

In a more sinister twist, while the agency's stated reason for allowing the capture was "academic research", the orcas seem destined to be used as fodder for the entertainment industry. According to the latest reports, three of the captured orcas are at Nanki Shirahama Adventure World, (fax +81-739-43-3252), one is at the Taiji Whale Museum (fax +81-7355-9-3823), and one is at Izu Mito Sea Paradise (fax +81-559-43-2336).

Killer whales are actually large dolphins. They are intensely social, living in stable pods of up to 50 individuals. To kidnap and imprison these mammals in aquariums has, as academics have long been aware, devastating effects on their physical and mental health.

To harm these creatures merely to sustain the profits of circus operators is unequivocally wrong. I would like to call on concerned Guardian Weekly readers to request that the Fisheries Agency (Director-General Michio Shimada; Fax +81-3-3502-794): (1) stay out of the entertainment business; (2) stop issuing licences for the capture of protected mammals on spurious grounds; and (3) try to make up for its most recent error of judgment by ordering this pod of orcas to be released immediately.
Tim Groves,
Kyoto, Japan

Briefly

BRUCE INKSETTER'S letter (Israel wipes out the past, February 2), as with so many letters in the Guardian Weekly, belongs to the old Middle East that Rabin and Arafat tried to change.

It is true we have the Netanyahu hiccup, but he is already buckling under after realising the uselessness of harking back to the past.

I also live in a village which once had an Arab neighbour. Today it's called Ilaniya. Once it was Shejara. We have built an educational centre which deals in Jewish history, ancient and modern, and in the spirit of reconciliation between the two people, Israeli and Palestinian, we also preserve and record every detail we can find relating to the Arab and Muslim community. Arab readers with links to the Lower Galilee can help us in this task by forwarding photos, newspaper cuttings, etc.
(Dr) Eric Gould,
Lower Galilee, Israel

THE hypocrisy of United States policy on human rights is patently obvious (Blind eye to human rights, February 9). While Cuba must be punished and ostracised, China and some US friends and allies may have a free hand. Furthermore, it is interesting that Israel, whose violations of human rights and torture of Palestinian prisoners are phenomenal, escapes mention (Washington Post, February 9). Israel has the distinction of being the only country in the world where the torture of prisoners is legalised by Israel's Supreme Court.
Ismail Zayid,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

I HAVE experienced the terrible upheaval of leaving a war-torn country through necessity. I, however, as a white Rhodesian, was treated kindly by Britain and welcomed as a citizen. For asylum-seekers with no links to Britain's white colonial past, humanity is rarely in evidence.
Jennifer Leach,
London

IN YOUR report on Nawaz Sharif's victory in the Pakistan elections (February 9), you accomplished what neither the Queen nor the Australian government has been able to do — confer a knighthood on the former Australian prime minister, Malcolm Fraser.
Jeffrey Sheather,
Brisbane, Australia

AS A child of the swinging sixties who survived the selfish seventies and repressive eighties, and is coping with the dull nineties, may I suggest we call the next decade the naughties? Let's hope they are.
Peter Pullman,
New York, USA

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Peacemakers fudge deal on key town

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

THE impotence of international mediators in Bosnia was illustrated starkly for the second time within days last week when they fudged a key decision between rival Serb and Muslim claims to one of the country's most explosive flashpoints, the town of Brcko.

Faced with the threat of violence from both sides, the main American arbiter, Roberts Owen, put off for a year the ruling on who will control the strategic northeastern town, and in the meantime placed it under international supervision.

"It's definitely enough to avoid war," said the United States special envoy to the Balkans, John Kornblum.

Nato's stabilisation force in Bosnia, S-For, had concentrated its forces around the town in the run-up to the deadline for the decision, in expectation of serious trouble after rumours that the Serbs would be awarded the town.

The fudge highlighted how little headway has been made by international forces and mediators against the ethnic divisions seared deep into Bosnia by the war, despite the more than $1 billion spent in the past year on the international effort to bring a settled peace to the republic.

On Monday and Tuesday last week, more than 100 elderly Muslims were purged from the Croat-controlled sector of the southern city of Mostar as peacekeeping troops stood by and unarmed international police disappeared into barracks.

Outlining the decision — or lack of one — on Brcko at a press conference in Rome, Mr Owen, the American lawyer who chaired the all-party arbitration tribunal on the Bosnian town, said that "no winner is being awarded".

The international community's high representative in Bosnia, Carl Bildt, described the supervision plan as an attempt to strike a balance in "the mother of all difficulties in the Bosnian peace process". He said he would appoint a deputy to act as the supervisor, and is expected to nominate an American.

Western diplomats hope to give the supervisor — due to start work by March 15 — a better chance to reverse ethnic cleansing by giving him more executive powers, and the ultimate sanction of recommending who will win control over the town when a final decision is made in March 1998.

But the existing police, local council and courts are Serb, and have shown themselves determined to obstruct reintegration at any cost. Many Muslim houses in the area have been dynamited, but the perpetrators have never been caught. Economic inducements to co-operate have had little effect.

The supervisor will have control over a reinforced contingent of United Nations police monitors, but they will be unarmed. S-For is supposed to co-operate with the supervisor, but has so far been reluctant to involve itself in civil disputes — as the Mostar pogrom showed.

It is unclear whether Nato would allow its troops to come to the supervisor's assistance in removing a recalcitrant Serb police chief, for example.

The Bosnian Serbs, who seized and ethnically cleansed Brcko at the beginning of the war in 1992, have repeatedly threatened to go to war to keep possession of the town. The port on the River Sava lies at one end of a land corridor linking the two halves of Serb territory.

The town is also coveted by the Muslim-Croat federation as a gateway to western Europe. Whoever is chosen to run the town will have one important weapon in their armoury.

According to last week's judgment, the final decision on Brcko's future would depend on each side's compliance in the interim period. Mr Owen said Brcko could become a special self-governing district "along the lines of Washington DC".

Alija Izetbegovic, the Muslim leader and chairman of Bosnia's three-man presidency, had threatened to resign if Brcko was not awarded to the Muslim-Croat federation.

In recent days, Muslim refugees from Brcko had been gathering near the town threatening violent protests if it remained in Serb hands.

Burmese troops force Karens out

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

ABOUT 11,000 refugees arrived in Thailand last week after Burmese troops attacked Karen National Union (KNU) guerrilla camps in Burma.

The Karens had apparently burnt down and retreated from their Teakaplaw headquarters in the face of an overwhelming government offensive. The loss appears to be the KNU's worst since the Burmese captured its long-established headquarters at Mannerplaw in late 1994. But Karen commanders vowed to continue their guerrilla campaign from unfixed bases.

About 500 guerrillas had been struggling to hold Teakaplaw against about 1,500 Burmese troops, said Colonel Isaac, a Karen officer. The Burmese troops attacked three KNU mobile camps in Burma's eastern jungle, dispersing 4,000 guerrillas.

About 70,000 ethnic Karen refugees, who fled fighting inside Burma a number of years ago, have been living in refugee camps along Thailand's border. Most are relatives and followers of the KNU forces, which have been fighting for greater autonomy for the Karen state since Burma gained independence in 1948.

Last Sunday relief agencies were preparing to receive thousands more refugees. The agencies already tending the thousands of refugees in Thailand fear that 10,000 or more Karens now trapped by the fighting may also be poised to flee across the border. Officials are looking for camp sites to accommodate them.

Mortar and automatic weapons' fire could be heard from Thai territory last weekend as Burmese forces continued the offensive in which they have overrun a series of KNU strongholds several kilometres from the Thai border, triggering an exodus from border villages.

The displacement of civilians will provide further ammunition for critics of Burma's ruling generals, especially at a time when Western governments are warning the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) that admitting Burma into membership could set back relations with Europe.

Karen refugees near Umphang in Thailand, after crossing the Burmese border PHOTO: APICHART WEERAWONG

E-mail service reaches 1,000

THIS issue marks a milestone for the Guardian Weekly: more than 1,000 subscribers will receive it by e-mail, *writes Patrick Ensor*. In the two months since its launch, the new electronic service continues to attract interest. There have been few problems and much praise for the way e-mail delivers the news even before the paper is printed and wrapped.

If you are a subscriber to the paper and would like to take advantage of this free service, contact the Guardian Weekly's subscriptions department at Manchester either by e-mail to gwsubs@guardian.co.uk, by fax to (+44)161-876 5362, or by ordinary mail to The Guardian Weekly, 164 Deansgate, Manchester M60 2RR, UK.

Remember to include your e-mail address and your subscription number (it's the W plus seven digits on the wrapper address label) or, failing that, the subscriber's name and full address. Any new e-mail addresses registered by Friday should receive the next issue's e-mail package on the following Tuesday or Wednesday.

Beirut holds Red rebels

Reuter in Tokyo

LEBANESE authorities have arrested up to six key members of Japan's notorious Red Army guerrilla group, the Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, said on Tuesday.

Mr Hashimoto told reporters he had been informed by Lebanese officials that the ageing guerrillas and three supporters, all of them Japanese, were captured in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, where they had been holed up for years.

Lebanese officials said the detainees included Kozo Okamoto, aged 49, who was involved in the May 1972 shootout at Tel Aviv's Lod airport in which 24 people died and 100 were injured. Okamoto was captured by Israeli forces and sentenced to life imprisonment but was released in a Palestinian-Israeli prisoner exchange in May 1985.

The home affairs minister, Katsuhiko Shirakawa, said Japan would wait for the result of Lebanese action against the group before deciding whether to apply for their extradition.

The Japanese Red Army, founded in 1971, has about 40 members operating mainly in Lebanon and allied to hardline Palestinian factions.

The Week

THE US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, firmly rebuffed French attempts to set a "European" agenda for the enlargement of Nato and changes to its command structure.
Martin Walker, page 6

GOVERNMENT forces bombed three rebel-held towns in eastern Zaire, killing at least six people. Meanwhile up to 1,500 civilians are crossing Lake Tanganyika every day to escape rebel advances in the region, according to UN officials and Tanzanian authorities.

LESOTHO'S army put down an 11-day police mutiny, overwhelming the rebels with a dawn onslaught of heavy gunfire which forced them to surrender. The army said nobody was hurt.

THE warlord holding hostages in the Central Asian Republic of Tajikistan, Bakhrom Sodirov, freed all of them unharmed.

THE former Marxist dictator of Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile Mariam and 5,197 former officials of his deposed regime have been charged, some with genocide and war crimes, others with homicide and wilful injury.

THE White House cleared the way for 10 news organisations to open Cuban offices for the first time since the 1960s, despite the US trade embargo.

THE US government team prosecuting the Oklahoma bomb suspect Timothy Mcveigh has lost the last of its witnesses expected to provide a positive identification of the accused.
FBI woes, page 15

BRITONS will need permits to work in Hong Kong from April, under government legislation announced in preparation for the colony's return to Chinese rule on July 1.

THE New Zealand government agreed to a special compensation payout of $1.9 million to the families of 14 people killed when a tourist viewing platform crashed to the bed of a chasm nearly two years ago.

A MEETING next month of environment and fishing ministers from nine North Sea states to protect fish stocks from over-exploitation is being resisted by the fisheries department of the European Commission.

HUNDREDS of people have been killed in ethnic unrest in the Indonesian province of West Kalimantan in Borneo.

MORE than 300 fossilised dinosaur eggs have been discovered in the Indian village of Pisdura, 720km northeast of Bombay.

Kohl defies critics 'to seek fifth term'

Denis Staunton in Berlin

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl has decided to defy his critics by standing for a record fifth term in office next year in the hope of leading Germany into the next century, according to a newspaper report last weekend.

The mass-circulation Bild am Sonntag claimed that Mr Kohl would make a public announcement about his decision after his annual fasting holiday in April.

The chancellor has come under intense pressure from within his Christian Democratic Union to end speculation about his future with a public statement about his intentions. Last week he angrily dismissed a report that he was suffering from cancer and had undergone two secret operations since 1992.

"I am not suffering from cancer, thank God," he told the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper last weekend. "But I think that people who use such wicked methods to bring down a political opponent only damage themselves." Mr Kohl refused to confirm that he intended to seek another term, but hinted strongly that he was not yet ready to pass on the reins of power.

His authority has been cast in doubt in recent weeks by bitter rows in the centre-right coalition over ambitious plans to reform the tax and pensions systems.

The Christian Democrat leader in Lower Saxony, Christian Wulff, told an Italian newspaper that although Mr Kohl was the CDU's best candidate he could not expect to govern in the autocratic style he has favoured until now. "The Kohl era is not over," he said. "But the Kohl system is finished."

In his comments to Frankfurter Allgemeine, the chancellor sought to present a cheerful picture of Germany's economic prospects, claiming that unemployment — at its highest level since 1933 — was about to fall and could be halved by 2000.

But his optimism was undermined last weekend when a government spokesman refused to deny a report that the finance minister, Theo Waigel, will announce this week that public spending will be frozen for the third year in succession.

The opposition Social Democrats warned that rising unemployment and falling tax receipts are set to blow a DM10 billion ($6 billion) hole in Mr Waigel's public-spending estimates for this year.

The government recently increased its estimate of the 1997 budget deficit to 2.9 per cent of GDP, just inside the 3 per cent limit for entry to a single European currency. Most economists now predict that the deficit will be well above the limit, forcing Mr Kohl to choose between postponing the introduction of the euro or loosening the entry criteria.

"The deficit is too high and it cannot be turned back any further during the course of this year without driving Germany into an even greater unemployment crisis," Professor Wilhelm Hankel, an economist, said.

The deflationary measures Mr Kohl's government has taken in the hope of meeting the Maastricht criteria have already angered the German public, which opposes the single currency by two to one.

In the industrial Ruhr valley, 220,000 people protested last weekend against plans to cut subsidies to the coal industry. And post office workers went on strike throughout Germany to protest against plans to end the state monopoly on deliveries.

Union leaders warned the government last weekend against freezing spending, arguing it would reduce growth and increase unemployment.

Although Mr Kohl fears that postponing the introduction of the single currency could capsize the entire drive towards European integration, a growing number of Germans have warned that a weak, premature euro might lead to greater disaster.

"I do not believe the euro is a dynamic force — it is simply dynamite," Prof Hankel said. "The present level of integration would be endangered and social conflict would increase, both within societies and between them."



Skinheads board a train as they flee police after violent clashes in Berlin during protests against a meeting called by the far right in response to growing unemployment PHOTOGRAPH: WOLFGANG KUMM

Stephen Bates in Brussels and Larry Elliott add: Fears were growing in Brussels this week that Germany's inability to tackle the costs of its mounting unemployment crisis could scupper the Maastricht timetable and delay the start of monetary union for at least a year.

Despite official protestations that the single currency will happen in January 1999, private scepticism about the readiness of Europe's biggest economy for the project appeared to be intensifying.

British sources believe that the chances of a 1999 start date are rapidly diminishing, and that the doubts over which countries will qualify justify the wait-and-see approach favoured by both the British government and the Labour opposition.

However, the possibility of postponement is still publicly rejected by senior EU officials. Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the monetary affairs commissioner, said on Monday: "Monetary Union must occur on January 1, 1999 or we will have to change the treaty."

Racist passions, page 17

Dying Deng sparks a power play

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong and John Gittings

THE failing health of Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's economic reforms, has taken a grave turn for the worse, forcing his heir apparent and others in the Communist Party leadership to rush back to Beijing, according to a flurry of unconfirmed reports on Monday in Beijing and Hong Kong.

The death of Mr Deng, aged 92, would heighten uncertainty in the run-up to Hong Kong's July 1 handover. It could also precipitate a shake-up in the Chinese leadership as it prepares for a key Communist Party congress.

An independent Hong Kong newspaper reported last weekend that Mr Deng, unseen in public for three years, has suffered a brain haemorrhage. The colony's Beijing-controlled press said there had been "no big change" in his health — a shift from ritual assertions that he is in "good health for a man of his age".

Jiang Zemin, the Communist Party chief who has nominally run the country since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, was said in Beijing to have cut short a tour of central China to return to the capital. Li Peng, the prime minister, flew back from Guangdong province.

The two leaders visited Mr Deng last week to pay him their respects for the Chinese New Year, before leaving for working holidays in the provinces. They wished him "good health" but did not reveal how they found him.

If their return is confirmed, at a time when top cadres traditionally relax, this could signify a serious development.

The top leadership has been bargaining for positions before the 15th party congress is held in the autumn. Mr Deng's departure will change the delicate balance already reached, in a political culture where old leaders never completely retire.

Euro notes burn their bridges

Kamal Ahmed

THE European Commissioner for the single currency, Yves Thibault de Silguy, described them as a "victory for Europe" — euro notes so "non-specific" about where they came from that they could not possibly upset any national sensibilities.

Last week that victory turned to embarrassing defeat as the European Monetary Institute admitted that it was scrapping the original designs of vague architectural motifs — because they turned out not to be quite as vague as everybody supposed.

Despite months of deliberation involving all 12 members of the European Union, nobody had noticed that three of the notes, applauded for their neutrality at their launch last December, depict some of Europe's most famous bridges.

Another of the notes shows a pontoon bridge from India, not known to be applying for EU membership. None of the bridges is British, but it was an expert from Nottingham who applied egg to the faces of EMI officials who had said the notes should be praised as they "cannot be attributed to any particular monument in any single country".

"I couldn't believe how easy it was to identify the bridges," said Russ Swan, the editor of Bridge Design And Engineering. "I just picked one of the most mainstream bridge design books and there they all were." He used the bridge bible, Bridges — 3,000 Years Of Defying Nature, to identify the images, many of which appear to come directly from the book.

The 50-euro note shows the 16th century Rialto Bridge in Venice. The 100-euro note is the Pont de Neuilly in Paris, described as the "epitome of bridge design" for the 18th century.

The 500-euro note is the Pont de Normandie at the mouth of the Seine at Le Havre, opened just two years ago. "You can't miss it," said Mr Swan, who rang the French architect who designed the bridge, Michel Virlogeux, to confirm that it was his.

Policeman killed as ETA ups violence

Adela Gooch in Madrid

THE Basque separatist group ETA continued its violent offensive on Tuesday, killing a policeman in a car bomb attack in the Basque city of Bilbao and bringing the number of victims this year to six.

Modesto Rico Pasarín, aged 33, died instantly when a bomb attached to the bottom of his car exploded as he drove out of his garage on the way to a local court house.

The car burst into a ball of flame close to a school, but classes had started and none of the pupils was hurt. "Half an hour earlier and it could have been a blood-bath," said Carlos Iturgaiz, a local representative of the governing conservative Popular Party.

Rico, the fourth victim of ETA violence in a week, was chosen as a target because he worked in the courts. Police said his death was an act of reprisal for a judicial drive against leaders of ETA's political wing, Herri Batasuna.

Last week, a supreme court judge was shot through the head by an ETA gunman in Madrid hours after a car bomb exploded in Granada killing an air force employee. The following day a Basque businessman was shot dead.

ETA has now killed more people this year than in the whole of 1996, presenting the biggest terrorist challenge to the Spanish government since it took office nine months ago. It is also holding two kidnap victims — a prison officer and a Basque businessman.

The offensive has coincided with government action against the 25 leaders of Herri Batasuna, who have been summoned to appear before the supreme court on charges of promoting violence. They are refusing to answer the call and are being arrested one by one.

The government claims that a tough stance is the only response possible to a new generation of hardline radicals who took over in 1993 after the previous ETA leadership was arrested, and who exercise ruthless control over the movement and its various support groups, including Herri Batasuna.

The prime minster, José Maria Aznar, has ruled out any possibility of negotiating an end to violence while they are in charge.

This has led to tension with non-violent Basque nationalists, including the main Basque Nationalist Party, which supports Mr Aznar's minority government in the Madrid parliament but would like a more accommodating line.

ETA is keen to give an impression of operational strength whenever negotiations are discussed.

About 150,000 Basques — 11 per cent — voted for Herri Batsuna in last year's general election, signalling their approval of violence as a means of achieving a separate state. The figure reflects a steady decline in support but is considered a hard core difficult to erode.

● International pressure on the Spanish government to settle the country's lorry drivers' strike mounted as the disruption entered its second week.

Neil Kinnock, the European Union's transport commissioner, called on the Madrid government to follow France's example and promise compensation for loss and damage suffered by lorries operated from other member states.

Le Monde, page 13

Top actors oppose new race law

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

CATHERINE DENEUVE, Emmanuelle Béart and 400 other showbusiness personalities last weekend joined a campaign to disobey a new French immigration law.

The actors, comedians and singers signed a pledge, published in the Journal du Dimanche, to ignore a proposed law that anyone putting up a foreigner in their home should tell the police. The celebrities, who also include Jane Birkin and Isabelle Huppert, are the highest profile signatories of the civil disobedience campaign, launched last week in a music magazine by 59 film and theatre directors.

It has gathered more than 2,000 signatures from writers, journalists and lawyers. On Monday doctors, scientists and cartoonists signed the pledge in Libération.

As part of the protest against the legal amendment, due to have its second reading in the national assembly next week, a prominent "collective of 121 hard-to-pronounce names" has called a demonstration in Paris on Saturday.

The prime minister, Alain Juppé, has reaffirmed his determination to push through the rule change. "It contains nothing which will impinge on foreigners who are legally in our country, nor on their hosts," he said.

The amendment asks people who have given accommodation to a foreigner to report the person's departure. It does not provide penalties for not doing so.

Two other recent events have alarmed the intelligentsia. Last week the racist National Front won control of a fourth municipality — Vitrolles, near Marseille — and a few days later the artistic director of the Château Vallon dance theatre in Toulon was sacked after the NF mayor ruled that his repertoire was too subversive. That prompted more than 200 celebrities to stage a high-profile demonstration in the city.

Analysis, page 12
Le Monde, page 13

Del Monte Philippines

ON FEBRUARY 16 we published an article headed "The fast route to poverty" next to a photograph of a Del Monte product. The article was about the disastrous effect of US agricultural policy on Filipino maize producers.

Del Monte is not a US company. Its operation in the Philippines is managed locally and the majority of the shares are owned by a Filipino company. Del Monte leases the land for its plantations on commercial terms from employee co-operatives, local landlords and in small part the Philippines government.

Del Monte has advised us it is strongly committed to its workers' welfare. We did not intend to imply Del Monte was responsible for Filipino workers' poverty.

Report damns Rwanda tribunal

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

THE international genocide trials for Rwanda have been crippled by chaotic management, under-qualified legal staff and indifference at United Nations headquarters, according to a report by the UN inspector-general, Karl Paschke. He said that unless there was an overhaul the Rwandan people "will be right to suspect that justice delayed is justice denied".

Confidence in the tribunal among those who survived the 1994 killings and other Rwandans has been severely undermined. While 13 of the 21 people indicted so far by the tribunal are in custody, only one was a highly placed official in the Hutu regime that organised the slaughter.

Mr Paschke concluded that "not a single administrative area [of the court] functioned effectively" amid "mismanagement in almost all areas of the tribunal and frequent violations of UN rules and regulations".

His report singled out the tribunal's Kenyan administrator for criticism. It also accused the deputy prosecutor, a judge from Madagascar, of incompetence. The report noted that the administrator, Andronico Adede, spent half his time travelling without having his trips approved. While he was away administrative work would often stop. Infighting between the prosecutor's office in Rwanda and the tribunal administration in Tanzania led to equipment shortages.

The deputy prosecutor, Honore Rakotomanana, failed to co-ordinate investigations properly. Both men face the possibility of dismissal.

The UN inquiry was launched two months ago to allegations that the tribunal's African administrators hired unqualified friends, discriminated against non-Africans and paralysed the tribunal with incompetence and bureaucracy. But while Mr Paschke found gross mismanagement, he found no evidence of corruption.

The new chief prosecutor, the Canadian judge Louise Arbour, who has overall responsibility for the tribunal, welcomed the report as a turning point. She said she would fly to Rwanda and Tanzania this week to meet the officials most criticised.

Mr Paschke accuses the UN headquarters in New York of showing less interest in the tribunal than its counterpart for former Yugoslavia.

● A Kigali court sentenced Froduald Karamira to death last week as a ringleader of the 1994 genocide of hundreds of thousands of Rwanda's Tutsis. Three years ago he struck terror across the country with his radio broadcasts calling for mass murder. Today he is the highest ranking of the murderous extremists in the custody of Rwanda's new rulers.

East looks West to escape bear hug



The US this week

Martin Walker

HISTORIANS may yet decide that the geo-political shape of the 21st century was defined in December 1993, when Poland's foreign minister, Andrzej Olechowski, came to Washington and slammed his fist on the fragile table of Warren Christopher's sitting room on the seventh floor of the State Department.

He said that the West had abandoned Poland to Hitler in 1939. The West had abandoned it again to Stalin in 1945. Poland had freed itself by its own exertions — in the 1980s its Solidarity movement had been the moral crowbar that began to prise apart the crumbling stones of the Soviet empire.

In historic decency, in plain morality, and in its own naked self-interest, the West had no honourable alternative, Olechowski thundered. It had to extend Nato membership, and Nato's nuclear guarantee, to Poland and the eastern Europeans. How else would the West — or history — ever be sure that the good guys had prevailed in the cold war?

It was, according to those who witnessed it, a bravura performance, an electrifying mix of cold logic and hot passion. And it sent the still-young Clinton administration into something close to an existential crisis. On the one hand, it did not want to be accused of being the team who "lost" Russia by driving it into new hostility. On the other, it saw the prospect of being blamed for having "lost" the cold war by leaving the Poles, the Czechs and all the other nations liberated by the collapse of the Soviet Union stuck in a security limbo that would in time harden into a new Russian sphere of influence.

A series of anguished meetings took place in the White House, in the Pentagon and in the State Department. Within the month, President Clinton was in Europe to tell the Nato summit: "The question is no longer whether Nato will take on new members, but when and how."

As a result, the most determined thrust of American foreign policy for the remainder of this century is to enlarge the Nato alliance into central and eventually into eastern Europe, with Russian compliance if possible, but overriding the Kremlin's strenuous objections if necessary.

"We are on the verge of realising one of the most elusive dreams of this century — an integrated, stable and democratic Europe," the new secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, enthused to Congress last week on the eve of her visit to London and other Nato capitals.

"The purpose of enlargement is to do for Europe's East what Nato did 50 years ago for Europe's West: to integrate new democracies, defeat old hatreds, provide confidence in economic recovery, and deter conflict," she went on, bringing to the grand strategy the deep personal conviction of one who was twice driven into exile from her native Czechoslovakia — by Hitler in 1939 and by Stalin in 1948.

Albright and her colleagues are determined, one way or another, to persuade Russia to swallow an enlarged Nato alliance that stretches right up to the Russian border, while devising new mechanisms to draw a compliant Russia into a US-led transatlantic trade and security system. Albright told Congress last week that there really was no choice.

"There are only two real alternatives to enlargement. We could replace the Alliance with a lowest-common-denominator Nato that includes everyone and imposes obligations on no one. That would devalue and degrade Nato. Or we could delay enlargement indefinitely, freezing Nato's membership along its old cold war frontier. That would create not only a permanent injustice, but also a permanent source of tension and insecurity in the heart of Europe."

If true for the first phase of Nato enlargement — to bring Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into Nato in 1999 — that argument also holds good for the next question: whether eventually to include the Baltic states, Balkan states such as Romania, or even Ukraine — the most agonising prospect for Russia. Each new enlargement of Nato establishes a new frontier of those countries inside it, which automatically redefines the status of those left outside it.

Washington expects Russia to complain, and to drive as high a price as it can secure for its grudging compliance with the first stage. But in the final analysis no prospective Russian government is seen in Washington as having great sway in the matter of Nato. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that the

'The question is no longer whether Nato will take on new members, but when'

Clinton administration is coming to the view that the Russians will have little say in deciding their own future geo-strategic place in the world. Geography has already made that decision for them; Russian fears of China are likely to steer it ever more desperately into the Western camp.

Ironically, the plan for Nato's enlargement was initially greeted with some scepticism in Washington when it was first floated by the German defence minister, Volker Ruehe, shortly after German reunification. For Ruehe, the prime goal of German policy was to ensure that the country's newly acquired eastern frontier would no longer be the fault-line of Europe. Germany had been a front-line state long enough. It was time for some stalwart buffers to stabilise that age-old



danger zone between the Teutons and the Slavs.

Many in Washington agreed, including the under-secretary of state for security policy, Lynn Davis, and the Clinton administration's influential ambassador to Germany, Richard Holbrooke. They had the backing of what we might be called the eastern European mafia, that important group of US strategists who had been born in Germany and eastern Europe, such as Henry Kissinger, and President Carter's hawkish national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, not forgetting his star pupil at Columbia university, Madeleine Albright. For all of them there was a moral dimension to the issue. Abandoned to Stalin's tender mercies at the 1945 Yalta summit, the captive nations of the Soviet empire had a clear right to be drawn into and embraced by the security of the West.

Two powerful voices challenged this view. The first was that of the Pentagon, which warned that it would be expensive to enlarge Nato, and so divisive in Congress and among the American public that it could undermine the case for the US's continuing membership of Nato and its garrison of 100,000 troops in Europe. Then there was the deputy secretary of state (although at the time he only held the rank of ambassador), Strobe Talbott, a Russian scholar and Clinton's old Oxford room-mate. Talbott warned that it was "provocative, and badly timed with what is going on in Russia". Still officially secret, the nine-page paper that Talbott issued in October 1993 stopped in its tracks the US campaign for Nato enlargement.

As a compromise, the US promoted a plan conceived by the then Nato commander, General John Shalikashvili, for eastern European countries and Russia to join in a "Partnership for Peace". This was conceived as a flexible structure that could let them feel they had a voice, and a prospect of deeper involvement in the Nato-run security system.

Then came the visit by the Polish foreign minister, and his warning, reinforced by the Czech president, Vaclav Havel, among others, that the Poles and other eastern Europeans could have no real confidence in any new club that was so loose and vague that even the Russians were welcome to join it.

Talbott changed his mind. So did Clinton. This was in part because of the political pressure and direct lobbying from Polish-Americans and other ethnic groups in the US, and in part because of the strength of their argument. But the sheer political weight of ethnic lobbying concentrated the president's mind wonderfully.

US foreign policy can be shaped by domestic pressure almost more than in any other nation, thanks to the large number of voters prepared to rally and agitate on behalf of their mother countries. Last October, when Clinton finally and solemnly declared that Nato enlargement would begin this year, he chose to announce it in the suburb of Detroit with the highest concentration of Americans with eastern European roots.

The Pentagon's cost objections were brushed aside. The Czech, Polish and Hungarian military could be made compatible with Nato systems on the cheap, by offering second-hand US F-16 fighters at bargain prices. It was also decided to defer the costly construction of new army infrastructure on the military grounds that Russian weakness meant no early need to install US and Nato troops in eastern Poland.

The quibbling of Nato's European allies was also brushed aside. Britain, which had bitter wartime experience of the difference between giving military guarantees to Poland and delivering on them, objected that the new costs and open-ended military commitments were too daunting to be lightly assumed. Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl and foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, rehearsed the old Strobe Talbott argument, that the price to be paid in worsening relations with Russia was hardly worth the symbolic new security shield being granted to eastern Europe.

The Americans had an answer to that. The model for dealing with Russia, as devised by Kissinger, was that of Europe after Napoleon's defeat in 1815. To contain France's potential military threat, Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia formed the Quadruple Alliance. To absorb France in the political system, it was made a member — with Russia, Austria and Prussia — of the Holy Alliance of reactionary monarchies. Kissinger's modern version of this double alliance system is the basis for the current American plan to exclude Russia from Nato, but bring it into every other conceivable structure.

Last month, Talbott made the rounds of the European capitals to spell out the "special relationship" package that would be offered to win Russian compliance. There could be a new charter of Russian-Nato relations that would give Russia an institutionalised voice but not a veto in Nato's councils; a renegotiated Conventional Forces in Europe treaty to allow the Russians to boost troop levels in delicate areas such as the Caucasus and hold down military deployments in the new Nato member states; assurances of continued Russian access to eastern European arms markets; and so on and so forth.

All this still may not be enough to placate Russia, and may be too much for the increasingly isolationist Republicans in Congress to stomach — they are beginning to realise that extending Nato means being prepared to risk losing Boston to save Budapest. The Republican leaders, however, are persuaded. Newt Gingrich made Nato enlargement one of the 10 principles of his "Contract with America". The rank-and-file have yet to speak, but it will be quite a challenge to get the two-thirds Senate majority required to ratify any extension of the original Nato treaty.

The real problem about Europe is that enlarging Nato is a poor second to enlarging the European Union, if the goal is to complete the vision of the Marshall plan and erase Munich, Yalta and the Iron Curtain

Enlarging Nato is a poor second to enlarging the European Union

from the guilty conscience of the Atlantic alliance. Nato extends a brittle security to new members, but only the EU offers the prosperity to make that security self-sustaining and to buttress it with the political support democracies require. The economic troubles of the European nations, and the difficulty of ditching such key European structures as regional support budgets and the Common Agricultural Policy to account for new, poorer members, have delayed serious consideration of EU enlargement.

However, this EU project is not in America's gift — which is why the eastern Europeans are putting such pressure on Washington to get the Nato guarantee while they can. But without EU membership, the Nato members of eastern Europe face a fate as grimly impoverished and second-rate as that of Turkey, a Nato member kept out of the European club. The real 21st century nightmare for Europe would be an enlarged Nato facing a hostile Russia while the front-line states remain poor, disgruntled, and politically unstable.

The final, unknowable issue, is how far Nato itself will be changed in the process of enlargement. It has already become, after Bosnia, more of a security and peacekeeping system than a straightforward defensive alliance. It is becoming, even more than the EU, the real club that defines the European identity, as the Polish, Czech and Hungarian governments have been arguing for the past four years, and as the Baltic states, Romania and Slovenia are arguing today. In the far distant future, if the Danish defence minister is right when he says that he "can envisage a day when Russia too may yet be a Nato member", then Nato could conceivably become the club of all the white-skinned folk, stretching from Vancouver all the way around the globe to Vladivostok.

Family continues its fight for justice

Guardian Reporters

A CORONER'S jury last week went beyond the bounds of its instructions to issue an extraordinary condemnation of the killers of Stephen Lawrence, the teenage victim of a racist attack. The jury returned a verdict of unlawful killing "in a completely unprovoked racist attack by five white youths".

The condemnatory words exemplified the strength of feeling the case has provoked during the Lawrence family's four-year campaign for justice. Juries are required only to return a verdict as to whether a death was unlawful, accidental or "open".

Lawrence: 'murdered by racists'

In the wake of the verdict, his family announced they intend to take civil action against those they believe are responsible for the death.

Doreen Lawrence, Stephen's mother, described parts of the inquest as a "circus" after watching five white youths — Neil and Jamie Acourt, David Norris, Gary Dobson and Luke Knight — all refuse to answer questions, claiming a common law right of privilege against self-incrimination.

The following day the Daily Mail entered the row with a classic front page: a combination of visual boldness and the moral certitude on which the paper prides itself. The five men pictured beneath a one-word headline, "Murderers", and an invitation to sue if they dared.

"This is not a kangaroo court, because we are not trying them. What we are doing is challenging them to put up a defence, because this is something they have refused to do so far," said the paper's deputy editor, Peter Wright.

But the former Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson, later accused the newspaper of gross contempt of court. He said any further legal action had been compromised.

The Attorney General's office said there could be no question of statutory contempt by the Mail, since there were no ongoing criminal or civil proceedings. But "Lord Donaldson's suggestion that there may be a contempt under common law will be carefully examined".

It will be four years in April since the bright young A level student who loved football and music was killed for being black.

Stephen was standing at a bus-stop in Eltham in southeast London, waiting for a bus on the way to his Woolwich home when he was attacked by a group of white youths none of whom has ever been successfully prosecuted for the murder.

The murder has become symbolic of the simmering racial tension of the city, the distrust between some sections of the black community and the police, and the failures of the judicial system to bring to justice the racists who carried out the attack.

Stephen was with his friend Duwayne Brooks when the white youths ran towards them shouting "what nigger?" One felled Stephen and stabbed him.

On the night itself, Duwayne was the key witness but the trauma of what had happened affected him deeply and he was unable to complete a statement; he is still having post-traumatic stress counselling nearly four years after the event.

The murder soon became a political issue, with the failure to bring a successful prosecution later compared unfavourably with the speed with which the murderer of another Lawrence — the headmaster, Philip Lawrence — was dealt with.

In July 1993, two youths were charged with the murder but released after the Crown Prosecution Service decided that there was not sufficient evidence. The Lawrence family decided to bring its own private prosecution, but in April last year that case, too, collapsed at the Old Bailey after the trial judge ruled that vital eyewitness evidence was inadmissible. The jury formally acquitted Neil Acourt, Dobson and Knight and they cannot be prosecuted again for the same crime.

The committal hearing for the trial, the previous September, had been shown video film of the men clandestinely shot when a hidden camera was installed in Dobson's home. It showed the three men boasting about racist attacks.

The police say that they left no stone unturned and that there is deep regret that they were unable to bring the killers to justice.

Right to jury trial may end

Alan Travis

A DEFENDANT'S right to trial by jury in cases involving personal honesty and other offences is to be abolished under plans being considered by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard.

It is believed that such a move could affect up to 70,000 cases a year, about a third of those heard in crown courts.

The idea was floated by Mr Howard two years ago after recommendations from the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, and has been revived following an official inquiry into delays in the criminal justice system.

Ministers have in the past balked at the abolition of the right to elect for jury trial, particularly in cases involving personal honesty.

At present the defendant retains the right to insist on trial by jury rather than magistrate in cases involving theft, dangerous or reckless driving, possession of an offensive weapon, using class B or C drugs, and other crimes.

But the Home Secretary is considering abolishing the right of the defendant to elect for an expensive crown court trial in these cases. Instead, the decision on whether the cases should go to the higher court would be taken by the magistrate.

A Home Office consultation paper published in July 1995 said there had been a sharp rise in the number of defendants opting for crown court trial. They had risen from 59,000 in 1980 to 73,800 in 1992. Home Office research shows that in 60 per cent of these cases the lower magistrates courts had sufficient sentencing powers to deal with them.

At present only about 18 per cent of cases heard by juries are for indictable offences, and are committed straight to the crown court for trial.

Bishop gives up Bible for Lent

SOME of the faithful give up sweets for Lent; others eschew booze, swearing and sin. But a Church of England bishop has opted for professional self-denial and given up the Bible, *writes David Ward.*

The Right Rev Alan Smithson is not a total abstainer and will hang on to St John's gospel; but most of his time between now and the first Hallelujah of Easter Sunday will be devoted to a journey through the Koran.

Bishop Smithson insists that lessons can be learned from Islam. "If only all Christians would take seriously the beliefs of other traditions and religions we would be all the better for it," he said.

But the Rev George Curry, a traditionalist vicar working in Newcastle upon Tyne, was not impressed. "It means he is cutting himself off from the prime source of personal communication between God and his people. To give up the Bible for Lent is the most bizarre suggestion anyone could seriously make."

In response, Bishop Smithson said he was passionately concerned to help the Church understand other believers, not as rivals but as fellow travellers.

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The Week in Britain James Lewis

Defeat in the Lords spoils Howard's criminal record

HOME SECRETARY Michael Howard, who has had an uninterrupted run in introducing a number of illiberal legal measures over the past few years, was last week forced to pause.

In response to serious criticism in legal circles, by human rights groups, and in the House of Lords, Mr Howard reluctantly accepted Labour amendments to his Police Bill which would dilute the powers of the police to break in and bug homes or offices. Chief constables will now need the approval of a High Court judge to authorise bugging operations.

Two days later, the House of Lords knocked out the foundation stone of Mr Howard's flagship law-and-order measure, the Crime (Sentences) Bill, which was designed to remove the discretion of judges when sentencing persistent burglars and drug dealers. The Home Secretary complained that the defeat "drove a coach and horses" through his US-style "three strikes and you're out" plan for statutory minimum sentences.

That was exactly what was intended by his opponents — a Labour-led alliance of peers, including the Lord Chief Justice and former Tory cabinet ministers — who want judges to have the final say in sentencing. Mr Howard defiantly said he would try to overturn the Lords defeat, but Commons arithmetic suggests that he will fail, since normally loyal Government supporters are also unhappy about the Home Secretary's despotic tendencies.

Labour emerged with little credit from this. Anxious not to appear soft on crime, the shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, had initially supported both bills, and only belatedly demanded amendments to them after a loose coalition of lawyers, judges and Liberal Democrat peers had shamed him into action.

Besides concerns over civil rights, Mr Howard's sentencing proposals would add an estimated 11,000 to the prison population. Since prisons are already at bursting point, another 12 new jails would be needed to house them.

THE HEADLINES proclaimed that the "adjusted" number of people out of work and claiming benefit fell in January by an astonishing 67,800 — the second biggest monthly fall since 1971 — to bring the total to a six-year low of 1,815,000, or 6.5 per cent of the workforce.

But the news was mostly buried away on inside pages because no one — not even the Bank of England or the Treasury — now regards the monthly counts as reliable indicators of joblessness, still less of economic performance. The recent figures have been distorted by the new Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA), which makes it harder to claim unemployment benefits.

The introduction of JSA has caused the average monthly fall in unemployment to leap from 19,300 to 63,900. In setting monetary policy, even the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is now giving more credence to the quarterly Labour Force Survey, which assesses joblessness by availability for work rather than eligibility for benefits.

A SMALL but growing minority of private doctors were claimed by the Home Office to be making massive profits out of over-prescribing drugs to dealers who then resell them on the streets. Some doctors were said to be making £100,000 a year out of the trade.

A group of researchers who interviewed heroin and crack dealers in London found that large sums of money could be made by issuing weekly repeat prescriptions to dependent drug users, in return for a consultation fee of around £25. Pharmacists charged an average £75 for dispensing drugs such as methadone

They allowed the drug dealers credit, enabling them to collect half the prescribed amounts, sell them off, and then collect the rest and pay off the pharmacist.

A FAMILY tragedy, played out for years in a West Yorkshire bungalow at Huddersfield, ended in court when two teenage sons and their father were sentenced for murdering the boys' mother. David Howells, aged 48, was given a life sentence, and his two sons, Glenn, 17, and John, 16, were ordered to be detained indefinitely.

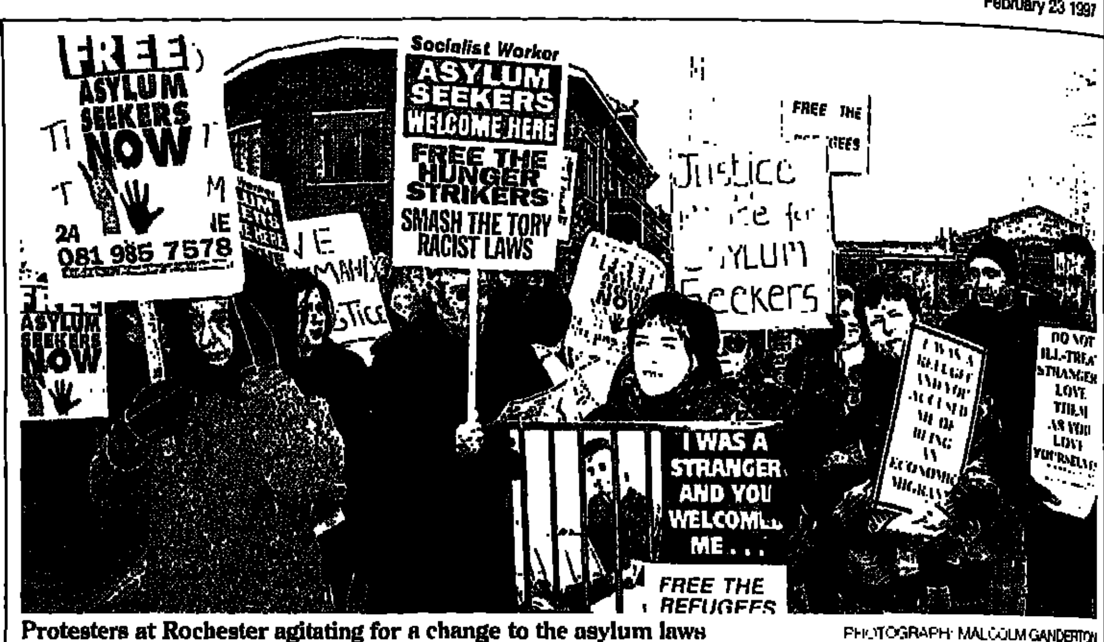
The murder victim, Evelyn Howells, a teacher of religious affairs, emerged during the trial as a woman of almost insane vindictiveness who tormented her family, screamed abuse at the boys, swore and spat at them, and forced them to eat week-old mouldy food. She was killed with a hammer blow by Glenn, and the bloodstained evidence was disposed of by John. Their father was drinking in a pub at the time of the killing.

Mr Justice Allott adjourned sentencing for a day in the hope that the three would confess their exact roles in the killing. When no further explanation was forthcoming, he ruled that the father had been the instigator of the crime.

THE NATION'S high streets witnessed the end of an era when leading newsagent W H Smith cleared its top shelves of pornographic magazines. Smiths' shops have been the target of high-profile anti-pornography campaigns, but a spokesman insisted that the clear-out was not for moral reasons but because of falling demand.

Austin





Protesters at Rochester agitating for a change to the asylum laws PHOTOGRAPH: MALCOLM GANDERTON

Standing fast for detainees' rights

PRISON WATCH
Gary Younge

IF THERE is such a thing as a good day for demonstrating in support of incarcerated asylum seekers on hunger strike, then last Saturday was definitely it.

Despite the chill breeze there was a bright sun shining on all the misery and hope that have been gathering outside Rochester prison every Saturday afternoon for the past six weeks.

On the inside are the asylum seekers — people who say they have fled persecution or torture in their mother countries only to arrive in Britain and be imprisoned without ever committing a crime.

Demonstrators say that between 10 and 15 asylum seekers from Algeria, Nigeria, Romania and Zaire are still on hunger strike after more than 40 days, protesting that they are being treated like convicted criminals while their asylum applications are being processed.

There are four at the prison itself who are accepting fluids but no food. The others are in the jail's health centre.

Protesters are concerned that some of the hunger strikers might be coerced into accepting treatment they do not want. "There is no doubt that after 41 days of refusing food their medical condition is already dangerous and perhaps irreversible," the support group said.

The protesters represent groups ranging from Catholic Women Against Ann Widdecombe to a handful of Sparticists trying desperately to find someone to buy a copy of Worker's Hammer.

Sometimes protesters and hunger strikers make contact. The person with the megaphone will call for quiet and then scream *"Libérez les camarades"*. Then everybody strains to hear a response. Occasionally the heavy silence of hundreds of demonstrators will be punctured by a faint cry from within the prison, which is greeted by a huge cheer.

In the residential area surrounding the prison local people get along with their Saturday afternoons as best they can with scores of protesters standing at the top of their road and shouting through megaphones.

Protesters say the Government's decision about who should be imprisoned and why is arbitrary, not subject to appeal, and effectively criminalises people seeking sanctuary.

Among the demonstrators are some familiar faces — Nick Di Marco and Karen Doyle, two of the students involved in the paint attack on Brian Mawhinney two years ago and Joyce Onibiyo, seeking to reunite her family after the Home Office scattered it to the four corners of the globe. Her husband, a Nigerian pro-democracy activist, was sent back to Nigeria shortly after the execution of the poet Ken Saro-Wiwa and has not been heard of since. Not long after that her 20-year-old son Ade was sent to Guyana, where he knows nobody.

But there were some novices to protests, such as Maureen West, aged 46, who has never been on a demonstration before.

"I don't know much about the political side of it. But I don't think it's fair. I can't see the point in letting people die," she says.

Whip's role 'a mistake'

THE Government was heavily criticised by a powerful Commons committee last week for appointing junior whip Andrew Mitchell to sit on the first parliamentary "cash for questions" inquiry two years ago, *writes David Hencke.*

The Commons Standards and Privileges Committee accepted Mr Mitchell's assurances that he did not misuse his position, but said the appointment by the Whips' Office was "a mistake which damaged the work of the Select Committee of Members' Interests during 1994 and 1995.

"We recommend that the House never in future appoints a whip of one of the main parties to any quasi-judicial select committee."

The critical findings follow an investigation into a complaint against Mr Mitchell about his behaviour on the committee. The dispute centred on whether Mr Mitchell had abused his position as an independent MP by using his role as a government whip to influence an investigation into the Neil Hamilton affair.

Gurkhas win equal status

David Fairhall

THE Gurkhas, loyal mercenaries of the British crown since the Indian Mutiny and still paid at modern Indian army rates, are to be integrated with the rest of Britain's armed forces for the first time in 140 years.

Prompted by the pull-out from Hong Kong in June, the army is offering them married quarters in the UK for the first time and is ending pay differentials of 200 to 300 per cent that have spread dissension throughout the brigade.

Their basic pay is still tied to that of the Indian army under a tripartite "no poaching" agreement between Britain, India and Nepal in 1947. A corporal gets £230 a year, although his earnings are now enhanced by allowances which vastly exceed this basic rate. The problem is that over the past few years allowances for postings, accompanied or unaccompanied by families in Hong Kong, Brunei and the UK, have become wildly out of alignment. In Brunei, some men are paid three times more than others of the same rank, simply because they are accompanied by their wives.

From next July allowances will change so that all members of the 3,400-strong brigade get the same, subject to rank, wherever they are posted.

They will also get parity with British soldiers alongside whom they increasingly serve in mixed units. However, the pension paid at the end of a Gurkha's 15 years of service — £26 a month — still reflects Nepalese, not British circumstances.

The Government will honour the 1947 agreement's stipulation that at least one in four Gurkhas should have accommodation for their families during their 15-year period of service away from home, as well as a long leave every three years.

This means providing 450 married quarters for about 900 Nepalese wives and children for the first time in army centres such as Winchester and Catterick.

● The army is to set up its own college for 16- and 17-year-olds in an effort to solve a recruiting problem, the Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, announced.

The Army Foundation College, probably using vacant military premises at Harrogate, Yorkshire, will take up to 1,300 boys and girls to be taught leadership, numeracy and communication skills plus a full military curriculum.

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Anger at rise in Rushdie fatwa bounty

Ian Black

BRITAIN last week urged Iran to denounce an increased bounty of $2.5 million offered for the killing of Salman Rushdie, and to produce written guarantees that the infamous *fatwa* would not be implemented.

Responding swiftly to news that an extra $500,000 was being offered for the murder of the author of The Satanic Verses, the Foreign Office called on President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to condemn the improved reward.

President Rafsanjani said his government had nothing to do with the 15th Khordad (June Fifth) Foundation, which bumped up the original $2m million offered after Ayatollah Khomeini's St Valentine's Day edict in 1989. President Rafsanjani said: "That foundation is non-governmental and its decisions have nothing to do with the government's policies."

But British officials said they did not accept the distinction since the head of the foundation, Ayatollah Hassan Sanei, is appointed by the country's leadership.

Jomhuri Islami newspaper quoted Ayatollah Sanei as saying: "The prize for executing Salman Rushdie is not limited to Muslims. Anybody — Muslim or non-Muslim and even his [Rushdie's] bodyguards — who carries it out will receive the prize. I am sure that the apostate . . . will be executed at the appropriate moment."

The newspaper's 15-page supplement on the author included a caricature of Mr Rushdie digging his own grave with a pen.

Last year Mr Rushdie gradually stepped up his public appearances and travel, but the security assessment changed for the worse in the autumn after receipt of specific intelligence about plans to act against him. Security has now been stepped up following the discovery of fresh plans to carry out the *fatwa* that suggest he remains a high risk target. He continues to live under permanent Special Branch protection.

An end to the affair seems remote, with Iran stalling in negotiations with the European Union. Tehran has insisted it will not "send, encourage or assist anybody" to kill Mr Rushdie, but cannot abrogate the 1989 *fatwa*.

Last week a meeting of the International Rushdie Defence Committee called for a time limit on the EU's "critical dialogue" with Iran, though chances of success are slim.

Even Britain, more hawkish on the issue than its European partners, believes dialogue should continue despite Tehran's lack of co-operation. No progress has been made since France launched an initiative to circumvent the *fatwa* in spring 1995.

Mr Rushdie said: "The critical dialogue with Iran . . . has achieved absolutely nothing. It is a very useful fig leaf for the European Union."

"It's very difficult to promote the fundamental issue about this case," says the committee chairwoman Frances D'Souza. "That is, that not to challenge it is a most dangerous precedent because it is a first in history where a state has issued a death threat against someone who lives in another country and has committed no crime."

Sniper kills soldier in Ulster

David Sharrock

A SOLDIER was shot dead by a sniper in South Armagh last week, bringing Northern Ireland to the brink of a renewed cycle of sectarian violence.

The murder, presumed to be the work of the IRA, in the mainly Protestant village of Bessbrook, represents an alarming escalation of the Provisionals' return to their campaign of violence in Ulster.

Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick, aged 23, a single man from Peterborough, was on a six-month tour of duty with the 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery. He died from a single shot while on duty manning the permanent vehicle checkpoint situated in the village.

South Armagh is a notoriously hardline stronghold of the Provisionals. In the last few days a republican source has indicated that, while such areas remained quiescent, the prospects for a restoration of the IRA's ceasefire were relatively good.

Loyalist sources have suggested that their ceasefire would remain intact only as long as there were no further casualties caused by the IRA in Northern Ireland.

Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, linked to the outlawed loyalist Ulster Freedom Fighters, said the murder was "a demonstration of Sinn Fein's so-called peace strategy". He said that in order to salvage the situation the Government must "meet the IRA threat directly".

The soldier was the second to be killed by the Provisionals in Northern Ireland since the IRA abandoned its ceasefire just over a year ago. In October, Warrant Officer James Bradwell died from injuries he sustained in the IRA's double, no-warning bombing of Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn, Co Antrim, the army's headquarters in Northern Ireland. Thirty civilians were also injured.

Recent speculation that the IRA has been conducting a "phoney war", with a series of aborted or failed operations against security force targets, was rejected last week by a representative of the IRA leadership. The source told reporters in Dublin that there was little prospect of a renewed ceasefire until the general election had been held and a government with a strong majority elected.

Other republican sources, however, have in recent days been expressing cautious optimism about the prospects for restoring the peace process, with a time frame of anything up to four months. Such a course of action was "inevitable", one source said.

Northern Ireland now has the highest number of British troops since the aftermath of the hunger strikes in 1982.

US embassy cites immunity to block case

Clare Dyer

A FORMER employee of the CIA in London who won £12,000 in a sexual harassment case against the United States government has had to drop a victimisation claim because the US embassy has claimed diplomatic immunity.

Mary Fogarty, who was turned down for nine US government jobs in London after her successful case, will not be able to argue before an industrial tribunal that she was victimised for standing up for herself.

The case is believed to be the first of its kind in which the embassy has asserted diplomatic immunity. The move comes amid outrage in Washington over a claim of diplomatic immunity by the No 2 official in the embassy of the Republic of Georgia, who is accused of killing a 16-year-old girl in a car crash. The State Department has asked the former Soviet republic to waive immunity so he can be tried for involuntary manslaughter.

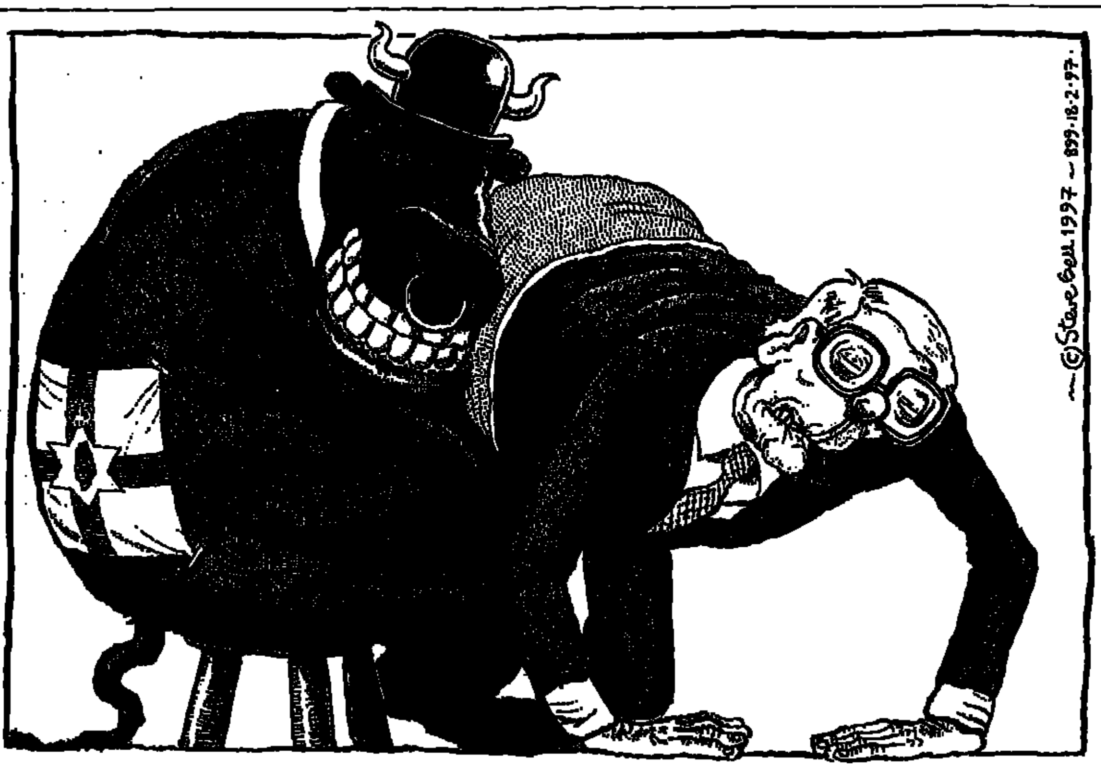
The State Department's action also comes as President Clinton awaits a ruling from the Supreme Court on whether he can remain immune from answering sexual harassment allegations.

An industrial tribunal ruled last May that Ms Fogarty, an Irish national aged 36, was sexually harassed by a co-worker, Martin Thomas, and that the US was guilty of sex discrimination in sacking her after she complained. Mr Thomas is still working for her former employer, the Foreign Broadcasting Information Service, a subsidiary of the CIA, in London.

The State Department could have claimed diplomatic immunity then but elected not to do so, though the judgment deeply embarrassed the department, which prides itself on its anti-discrimination policies.

Her second claim, now blocked, blamed the US Department of Justice and the personnel department for her failure to be offered interviews for the jobs she applied for. She had previously worked for eight years at the US embassy in Dublin.

Ms Fogarty, who lives in south London, hopes the new Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who was to visit Britain this week, would intervene in her case. "I would like to ask her: 'If I were an American would this have happened to me?'"



Tories survive vital vote

Michael White

JOHN MAJOR on Monday survived Tony Blair's boldest attempt yet to force him into an early general election, as Labour absentees and a high-profile abstention by the nine Ulster Unionist MPs combined to deliver a 320-307 Tory Commons majority over the £3.5 billion beef crisis.

But the row left both sides at Westminster furious with each other's tactics. Ministers accused Labour of irresponsible electioneering that had deepened the crisis, and the Opposition threatened to make the BSE "beef tax" fiasco the 1997 equivalent of the poll tax in the election campaign.

The Tories were cock-a-hoop that this "disgraceful example of Labour opportunism" — as party chairman Brian Mawhinney called it — had backfired. But Mr Blair has had five days of media-driven hype in which to unsettle ministers over a costly failure — £130 per taxpayer spent on the BSE crisis. The publicity is likely to work best for Labour.

Sick MPs and those travelling abroad, including the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, were summoned back to Westminster to vote. But when Roger Freeman, the Cabinet Office minister in charge of the mass cattle cull, included £9 million of addition compensation as a last-minute sweetener for Northern Ireland's "suckler herds", the Unionist abstention was clinched. It was the fruit of last-minute haggling.

Though the Tories achieved a full turnout of MPs, 320, plus two tellers, Labour's shortfall was underlined by two sick absentees, Sam Galbraith and Jimmy Dunnachie.

After David Trimble and his colleagues had met privately, then ostentatiously sat through the crucial division without voting, Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, dubbed it a "narrow and embarrassing escape" for Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture.

Labour now plans to shift the spotlight to Tory bungling on the health service and said it had put the Government's year of "chaos and confusion" firmly into voters' minds.

During the often angry exchanges Mr Hogg had gone no further than telling a succession of anxious Northern Ireland MPs that he would "urge" the European Commission to accept that Ulster has "a unique and reliable database" for proving that its prime beef herds are BSE-free. He will lay his plan for lifting the year-old ban on upmarket certified herds within two weeks.

Labour's spokesman, Gavin Strang, accused ministers of "blunder after blunder" — from the time BSE surfaced in cattle in the mid-1980s to the confirmation of the human strain, CJD, last March.

The Government's willingness to offer figleaf concessions to David Trimble's small but vital block of Unionist votes ahead of what most MPs predict will now all but certainly be a May 1 election angered Labour — but whetted the Unionist appetite to exploit their pivotal role. They hope to win agreement to set up a Commons "grand committee" to examine the province's affairs before Parliament is dissolved.

The word "urge" was as far as Mr Hogg would go to meet Unionist demands for fast-track treatment. But MPs on both sides later acknowledged that Ulster's grass-fed herds, all registered on computer and relatively BSE-free, were always bound to benefit first from the initial easing of the EU ban.

In an attempt to justify the protracted crisis, Mr Hogg claimed: "The overall commitment, domestic and European, is around £3.5 billion thus far. In doing so, we have made an investment in public health, an investment in agriculture, an investment in the countryside, an investment in our future. It is the clearest possible evidence of the Tory party's commitment to rural Britain."

Mr Strang said: "The last government gave us the poll tax. This Government has given us the beef tax." It had cost every taxpayer £130 and seen over-generous payments made to slaughterhouses while some farmers, packaging plants and transport firms got too little.

In Brief

THE Government suffered an embarrassing defeat when a bill to stop foreign dissidents in Britain supporting political violence against their own governments failed to clear its final stage in the Commons.

Comment, page 12

A YEAR after the Sea Empress grounded and its cargo cloaked South Wales in oil, Friends of the Earth is bringing a private prosecution against the Department of Transport.

STEPHEN DORRELL, the Health Secretary, was ditched from his job as constitutional supremo by John Major, angered by his intervention in the Scottish devolution debate.

THE British film industry celebrated a record number of Oscar nominations, with Anthony Minghella's The English Patient garnering 12 nominations and Mike Leigh's Secrets And Lies picking up five.

NORA BELOFF, the first female political correspondent of a major British newspaper, has died aged 78.

ADRIAN Hodgkinson, an RAF corporal who was 25, has become the 15th victim of CJD, the human form of mad cow disease.

A GIRL aged four who survived a Serbian army massacre in which most of her family died is to stay with the couple who tried to adopt her, even though she was smuggled out of Bosnia, a High Court ruled.

THE Foreign Office is investigating allegations that the Indonesian government has broken its undertaking not to use British-made water cannons and armoured vehicles to crush peaceful dissent.

ALMOST 800,000 homes in England, or one in 25 of all homes, remain empty despite slow improvement in occupation levels, annual figures indicate.

BILLIE-JO JENKINS, a 13-year-old girl who was murdered in her back garden in Hastings, East Sussex, had been stalked by a stranger for weeks before her death. A man is being questioned about the killing.

BROADMOOR special hospital has launched an investigation to establish whether pornographic videos obtained by a sex offender were smuggled into the high security institution or recorded inside.

BRITAIN'S roads and bridges are falling apart because of insufficient spending on maintenance by the government, according to a damning report by a cross-party committee of MPs.

Happy birthday to a class act

SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

DENNIS SKINNER turned 65 last week, and the House was in festive mood. How the memories came tumbling back!

The Beast of Bolsover (he's been an MP for 27 years) is one of Parliament's most treasured institutions, along with Big Ben, the Churchill statue in the Lobby, and the immemorial cry of "Who goes home?"

I myself treasure so many moments. The time (long before I met my dear wife) that a female companion and I were sharing a drink with another Labour MP. Dennis, with the charm for which he is famous, stared at the young lady and demanded: "Oo's this, then?"

"That's Simon's girlfriend," said the MP.

"Well, we all have our cross to bear," said Skinner, and walked off.

Later, during the Falklands war, I saw him deep in conversation with Ian Gow, then Margaret Thatcher's closest aide. "It must be serious," I murmured *sotto voce* to a colleague. "She's offering Skinner a job in a government of national unity."

Within seconds, he was at my side. "I heard that! Up North, where I come from, we say what we have to say to each other's faces. Not behind our backs."

I pointed out that I too came from the North, and that people there were as gossipy and malevolent as anywhere else in the country.

"Aye," he replied, "but you're middle-class." The venom in those last two words was magnificent.

In spite of my admiration, I hadn't realised this milestone had been reached until it was pointed out during Prime Minister's Questions. Tim Devlin (C, Stockton S) pointed out by how much pensions had risen since 1979, and how comforting this must be for Mr Skinner on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

A buzz of excitement and enthusiasm zipped through the House. Almost none of us had known that the great day had dawned.

Mr Skinner sat glowering straight ahead. "Smile, Dennis!" shouted various Tories.

But he was not in smiling mood. Skinner scowled at the press gallery, then at John Major. Frankly, this was not turning out to be much of a celebration.

"Wrong though you have been on almost every issue during your long parliamentary career," the Prime Minister merrily said. "In a minute, he's going to say he isn't 65, and I'm fiddling the figures! I hope he smiles before he's 66!"

This was beginning to sound scripted. But then so was the Gracious Response.

The birthday boy rose. "Perhaps the Prime Minister will now deal with the real issues in Britain today. He has been in power since 1990, since when he has doubled the National Debt, the borrowing requirement is now over £25 billion, this prime minister who came from the belly of the banking establishment even though he only swept floors at Standard Chartered . . . loss of £10 billion on Black Wednesday in one afternoon even though he had never been near a betting shop . . .

"Answer! Answer!" shouted Labour MPs. "Yes or No?" Mr Skinner finally forced a smile. And why not? He doesn't look a day over 64.

Forget the lavender and olives. The new Provence is a crowded, xenophobic zone that keeps voting the National Front into local power. If the economy fails to pick up, Le Pen could be president of France by 2002, warns **Alex Duval Smith**

National affront

THERE IS a certain idea of France as the country that excites all our tastes. There is the delicate spiritual food of Parisian refinement, with intellect and solidarity as everyday fare. There is also the rustic sustenance of the farmhouse kitchen, Provence itself.

This *certaine idée de la France* belongs in a heritage museum. Fascism has arrived through the servants' entrance and has designs on the seat of honour on the right of its hostess, Marianne, the mother of the Republic.

The gangrene, made apparently respectable by the ballot-box, took hold last week when the National Front won control of Vitrolles, an ugly new town of 40,000 people near Marseille. Vitrolles is significant because it is the party's fourth conquest in southern France and was not won thanks to a protest vote. When the people of Toulon, Orange and Marignane voted for the racist party in municipal elections in June 1995, no one knew what to expect.

Now, with the National Front's candidate, Catherine Mégret, installed in Vitrolles, people know just what is coming. And 52.4 per cent of them are crying out for the measures that already characterise National Front rule: pork on the menu in mixed-religion schools (Marignane), leftwing town-hall employees transferred to street-cleaning duties (Toulon), and water bills plummeting because the utility company needs no longer maintain mains and sewers (Orange).

Forget the beautiful colours, the olive trees and the sound of crickets. This Provence — the hideous, densely populated part including France's second city, Marseille — is where the National Front is launching its takeover bid for France. It also has designs on Nice and Cannes.

The area is a xenophobe's dream because it has ingredients that amount to all spice and no social fabric: mass tourism, immigration, wealthy pensioners moving down from northern Europe, unemployment, years of corruption and a large population of *pieds-noir* (French ex-colonials thrown out of Algeria after independence in 1962). Such things do not make a social fabric.

As if these were not enough, the area is as rudderless as the rest of France in the face of globalisation — that seemingly unstoppable phenomenon which is the antithesis of *savoir-vivre* and regional variety. France is not a country that wants flexible working or believes that there is any quality of life on the Internet.

The country's leaders have not come up with answers. The politicians are "all the same" because they have caught that dangerous illness, conciliation politics. The intellectuals are "all the same" because their leftwing idealism was exhausted by the 14-year rule of President François Mitterrand.

Vitrolles, Orange, Marignane and Toulon are just the beginning of a political trend built on that streak of fear, bitterness and greed which can be exploited in so many of us. From there, it is not a big step to locking up Aids patients, expelling immigrants and imposing nationality tests on earlier generations.

There is no longer any taboo attached to voting for the National Front in the south of France. Next year, the country holds elections to the National Assembly and the party will almost certainly consolidate its grip in the region.

The real gloom merchants warn that Jean-Marie Le Pen, the National Front founder and leader, stands a good chance of becoming president of France in 2002. Their scenario has the Socialists gaining a majority of seats in next year's parliamentary elections but failing to create the 700,000 jobs they pledge. Then, they argue, if the single currency does not create the boom we are promised, Mr Le Pen will be pushing at an open door.

Much could happen to prove them wrong. The mainstream right wing is divided over how to proceed. President Jacques Chirac, a fervent anti-racist, does not want to flirt with the National Front. But influential men close to the government believe intercourse with the National Front is the only solution.

The party itself is divided as a power struggle emerges between those supporting the cunning strategist, Bruno Mégret, and those who like the loudmouth approach of Mr Le Pen. At the moment, Mr Mégret — slick and able to win votes without being explicitly racist — seems to be winning. But if the far less subtle Mr Le Pen hangs on to the leadership, the party could begin to look increasingly old and anachronistic.

That, however, is a slim hope to hang on to in a country so overcome with inertia and confusion in the face of decline that more and more people think the solution lies with the party waving the *tricolore* flag.

Le Monde, page 13

The illiberal stamp of an infirm government

Seumas Milne and **Richard Norton-Taylor** castigate a bill that would erode political freedom

SOON after Karl Marx arrived in London as a political refugee in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions, the Austrian and Prussian governments demanded that Britain take "decisive measures" against him, suggesting transportation to the colonies as the most suitable option. The Austrian ambassador warned the British Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, in 1850, that Marx and his fellow revolutionaries had "discussed even regicide".

With studied imperial disdain, Sir George replied: "Under our laws, mere discussion of regicide, so long as it does not concern the Queen of England . . . does not constitute sufficient grounds for the arrest of the conspirators."

Times have changed. Last week, a bill that would have made Marx, Nelson Mandela and countless other political exiles over the past 150 years vulnerable to criminal prosecution for inciting rebellion against their own governments came within a hair's breadth of passing its final stage in the House of Commons.

That it was at least temporarily halted was due only to the incompetence of Government whips, who failed to make sure that enough of their own supporters were present, and the outright opposition of just one Labour MP — George Galloway.

The Home Office has not given up. A spokeswoman said there was every hope that this "important anti-terrorist measure" would get its third reading when it returns to the Commons at the end of February.

Technically, the Jurisdiction (Conspiracy and Incitement) Bill is a private member's initiative. In reality, it was cooked up by the Government to pacify foreign governments — notably Saudi Arabia — in the wake of last year's botched attempt to expel the Saudi dissident Mohammed al Mas'ari to the Caribbean island of Dominica. The measure was one of a series of sops offered to King Fahd by the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, during a fence-mending visit to Riyadh last summer.

What is extraordinary is that such a sweeping change in UK law — which would have a far-reaching impact on the rights of British nationals as well as of political refugees — could have been rushed through with the broad support of the main opposition parties and barely a whisper of media comment.

The bill would for the first time make it a criminal act to incite or conspire in activities in a foreign country that are illegal both there and in Britain. The small print includes as a form of incitement the communication of "messages" — fax machines have been the engine of the Saudi dissident campaign — from Britain to opposition groups abroad.

Although Timothy Kirkhope, the Home Office minister, has said that the new powers were also aimed at paedophiles and football hooligans, his department confirmed that the bill is targeted principally at those in Britain who support political violence against foreign governments.

Mr Mandela and the rest of the ANC leadership, who launched armed resistance to the apartheid regime in the 1960s after all legal avenues had been closed to them, would certainly have been guilty under such a law. So would those Chilean exiles and their supporters who backed resistance to the Pinochet dictatorship — or those who defended Palestinian attacks on Israeli forces in the occupied territories, or the opposition to Indonesia's occupation of East Timor.

So, for that matter, would German and Italian anti-fascists who organised underground sabotage from London against Hitler and Mussolini in the mid-1930s — when Conservative politicians still regarded fascists as a force for stability in Europe.

Faced with misgivings from all three main parties, the Government agreed to include a "safeguard" in the bill. The concession was to give the Attorney General and Director of Public Prosecutions the final say in any politically sensitive prosecutions.

That would merely compound the dangers by introducing an additional political ingredient and making prosecutions dependent on the diplomatic whim of the day. In the early 1980s, London-based Iraqi opposition groups fought Saddam Hussein in Kurdistan when he was tacitly backed by the West. Now some are supported by Britain and the United States. The point was taken up by the Tory MP, Edward Leigh, who warned that the bill would lead to the government "cherry-picking terrorists", with Saudi dissidents prosecuted while Iraqis were given a free hand.

THE problem is not only one of defining terrorism, but of obtaining proof. The prosecution would have to rely on evidence provided by foreign governments with very different political and legal systems. Civil rights groups say the main impact of the bill would to intimidate exiles into silence for fear of falling foul of the law.

At the international level, the British convinced the United Nations last year to adopt a Declaration on Terrorism, aimed at encouraging states to refuse asylum to anyone suspected of terrorist activities. Those "financing, planning, and inciting terrorist acts", it says, should forfeit the protection of the 1951 UN convention on refugees, which has often been used by asylum-seekers as a defence against extradition or entry refusals. But there is no consensus about what the declaration would mean in practice.

Mr Galloway, who only derailed the bill's passage by forcing a vote when there was no quorum, said he would do whatever was necessary to block the measure when it returns to the Commons.

It would, he said, "criminalise those who work to organise and inspire the overthrow of tyranny around the world". Even if the bill runs out of time before the election, Labour's front bench is considering its own modified version. The British Parliament says it wants to seek to prevent Britain becoming a base for violent action against states where democratic change is possible, yet it is at risk of signing up to a modern version of the Divine Right of Kings — where the powers-that-be must always be protected, whoever they are and however they rule.

Four court routs in a row

EDITORIAL

WHY BEAT about the bush? Ministers haven't. If at first you cannot shut them out, then starve them out. That in a nutshell has been the Government's shameful approach to asylum seekers. Track back 18 months. After two years of squeezing asylum procedures as tight as possible, ministers produced a new wheeze at the Conservative party conference in October, 1995: a procedure under which asylum seekers would lose their rights to benefits unless they applied for refugee status immediately on stepping ashore. It was unveiled to delegates by Peter Lilley with Michael Howard's support after the Tory research director expressed satisfaction over how well anti-immigration policies had played in the 1992 and 1994 European elections.

Monday's Court of Appeal decision is the fourth judicial ruling against that earlier tacky tactic and has finally defeated the demeaning moves by ministers to evade their international obligations to refugees.

Benefits were initially withdrawn from asylum seekers in February 1996, only for the courts to declare the new regulation illegal. The appeal court was scathing, suggesting the new policy was so "draconian" that "no civilised nation can tolerate it". Undeterred, ministers decided the judicial decision could be evaded by new primary legislation. Hence a new clause was introduced into the Asylum Bill passed last July. Again several thousand refugee applicants had their benefits withdrawn. Again the courts intervened. In October the High Court ruled that there was still an obligation on local councils to provide "shelter, warmth and food" under the 1948 National Assistance Act. Mr Justice Collins declared: "I find it impossible to believe that Parliament intended that an asylum seeker, who was lawfully here, and who could not lawfully be removed from the country, should be left destitute, starving and at risk of grave illness and even death." On Monday that ruling was upheld on appeal.

This tawdry political manoeuvre has caused chaos. A civilised nation should not subject asylum seekers to an arbitrary system of support. What is missing is ministerial leadership: a readiness to accept the full financial cost nationally and a recognition that current delays in the asylum appeal system must be drastically reduced — a reform that in itself would slash costs.

Violence leads nowhere in Basque Country

As ETA flexes its muscles by killing a judge and bombing a military base, **Marie-Claude Decamps** in Madrid analyses its strategy

EACH new murder in the apparently never-ending cycle of violence that the Basque Country and Spain as a whole has to bear always prompts the same question: is Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) getting anywhere in its armed struggle for a separate Basque state? As always, there is no easy answer.

ETA has undoubtedly lost a great deal of ground on every count. Since carrying out its first murder in Guipuzcoa in 1968, the separatist organisation has notched up 753 victims and carried out 76 kidnappings. But it has also suffered setbacks, especially from 1987 on, when closer co-operation between Spanish and French police forces led to the arrest of 27 alleged ETA leaders and the break-up of arms supply networks and support structures.

Those were difficult years for the movement. As Spain gradually became more receptive to the idea of regional autonomy and prepared to join the European Union in 1986, ETA's old ideological tenets and justification of violence became less attractive to a civilian society that yearned for a more peaceful era.

Basque separatists enjoyed an upsurge of sympathy when GAL, a state-run terrorist organisation, carried out a "dirty war" against ETA, resulting in the deaths of around 20 of its sympathisers between 1983 and 1987. But that sympathy soon subsided, as did hopes of an "honourable" negotiated solution after the failure of the Algiers talks organised by Spain's Socialist leaders in 1989.

In 1994 there was an attempt within ETA and especially its political wing, Herri Batasuna (HB), to call into question the movement's policies. But the hardliners again won the day: José Luis Urrusolo, a fast-rising star of the movement, criticised the "soft-bellied bureaucratic ways of former leaders".

To improve its effectiveness, ETA doubled up its structure, putting two people in each position of responsibility and filling vacancies as members were arrested. There was a power shift away from historic leaders to "colonels" and sometimes even "sergeants" in the movement. ETA clung to its ideological line, but sometimes showed a serious lack of preparation and political nous.

Some experts on Spain's anti-terrorist campaign believe strategic and operational decisions are now taken not so much by ETA as by the collective leadership of the Aberzale Socialist Co-ordination (KAS), a loose grouping of radical leftwing Basque nationalists that has no official existence, and which serves as an ideological think tank for ETA and, increasingly, HB. Now that HB has adopted an extremely radical line, it has lost some support. But it still accounts for 13 per cent of the vote in Spain's Basque Country.

It would seem the Basque separatists' strategy is to maintain maximum pressure on the Spanish government, less in the hope of bringing about an "overall negotiated solution" in the short term — which José Maria Aznar's conservative government refuses to envisage until ETA lays down its arms — than to force through a one-off deal on the issue of the 610 ETA members now in jail (more than 60 in France).

The prisoners, who have a say in the running of their organisation, have been pressing the government to regroup them in the Basque Country. It was in the hope of bringing the government to the negotiating table that ETA kidnapped a prison warder, José Antonio Ortega Lara, a year ago.

To buy and maintain its weaponry, pay the rent of houses and flats used by activists, finance their travel costs, forge documents, and keep up the morale of its jailed members and their families, ETA needs large sums of money. Jésus Duva, a journalist on the daily El Pais who is an expert on the subject, estimates it needs at least $8 million a year.

To get such sums, ETA kidnaps VIPs and leans on large companies to pay a "revolutionary tax". Those who refuse to pay find their windows smashed or lorries blown up.

ETA has managed to build up a series of financial networks, some of which have been broken up by police. To launder its funds, it can rely on a far-flung network of "fronts" — Basque hotels, restaurants and dry-cleaners not only in the French Basque Country and Brittany (where many Spanish Basque activists have been "dispersed" by the French authorities), but in Mexico, Venezuela and Uruguay.

But even if ETA has lost some of its power, it is still fully operational. According to the Spanish interior ministry, its military structure has now been reduced from 10 "illegal commandos" to a maximum of four, including a "roving" commando in Madrid.

It is widely expected that 1997 will be a difficult year, marked by an escalation of violence. ETA knows time is not on its side, and wants to force a deal by picking on symbolic targets as it did last week.

The government has little room for manoeuvre. It has officially ruled out negotiation; and even if it changed its mind, who would it negotiate with? "Antxon", an elderly ETA figurehead exiled in Santo Domingo, remains its official interlocutor. But he can no longer really speak on anyone's behalf.

Should the government fight ETA every inch of the way? That could take a very long time. And there is no chance that ETA activists will "repent", as some members of the Italian Red Brigades did: for Basque separatists, ideology is more important than anything else. "Yoyes", one of the few ETA leaders to have given up the struggle, was assassinated by his former comrades in 1986.

The only remaining solution open to the Spanish authorities is closer co-operation with France, where the ETA leadership is still thought to be in hiding. They would like to see the French government play a much more active role, particularly now that ETA seems to be moving closer to its French Basque counterpart, Iparretarrak.

(February 12)

The Front's stain on democracy

EDITORIAL

BRUNO Mégret, unofficial second-in-command of the far-right National Front (FN), was right to talk of a "historic victory" when his wife Catherine was elected mayor of Vitrolles, near Marseille, on February 9. Her election marked a historic setback for democrats everywhere.

Those on the left and on the mainstream right would be wrong to adopt a "you win some, you lose some" attitude. The result does not simply mean that a fourth town in the south of France has fallen into the hands of the far right; it shows that unemployment, bungled immigration policies and the shortcomings of some elected representatives have encouraged an increasing number of voters to regard the FN as an acceptable alternative.

Vitrolles marks the first occasion that Jean-Marie Le Pen's party has won an absolute majority of votes at a local election. It has done so without needing to rely on splits among its rivals — as was the case when it won the three other towns in the south, Toulon, Orange and Marignane, in 1995.



'This here's a young man. He wants to train as a librarian'

The defeat can be partly ascribed to the blight of poor town-planning and the character of the leader of the Socialist list standing against the FN — a shop-soiled mayor who was disowned by some of his former friends while facing corruption charges. But the painstaking efforts of FN activists, who had a clear understanding of what the local population aspired to, also paid dividends.

Whatever some mainstream leaders on the right may have claimed, the election was very much a national test. The neo-Gaullist prime minister, Alain Juppé, and the centre-right leader, François Léotard, realised that Le Pen's party was just as great a foe as the left, and hinted to their traditional voters that they should bar the FN's path at Vitrolles. All they can now do is accept the fact that their constituency did not listen to them.

Their patient efforts to explain what was really at stake in the election will need to be energetically sustained for some time if they are to have any hope in future of influencing voters.

As for the left, it cannot ignore its responsibility for the result. It is not just the manner in which Vitrolles' Socialist mayor ran the town that has been condemned by voters. The left urgently needs to rebuild the fabric of voluntary associations that was long its strong point, and to understand that its electoral fortunes will hinge on how people vote in districts that have been left to fend for themselves.

Worthy sentiments will no longer do. Catherine Mégret's victory may cause the FN to move in an even more dangerous direction. Bruno Mégret, standard-bearer of the party's "modern" wing, unofficial candidate to succeed Le Pen, and now "deputy mayor" of Vitrolles, is the sort of person who may camouflage for a time the presence in his party of believers in old-fashioned far-right views.

The French have already had a chance to judge for themselves how dangerous those ideas can be. Bruno Mégret's version of the far right is one that has draped itself in modernism while remaining as xenophobic as ever. It is therefore all the more pernicious. All those who believe in democracy must accept that the priority now is to fight the FN.

(February 11)

Chavalit: facing problems

Poor Thais take on the power centre

Jean-Claude Pomonti in Bangkok

THAILAND'S high growth rate from 1986 to 1996 left large numbers of people by the wayside. The poorest third of the country's 60 million population live on the Korat plateau, a northeastern region regularly hit by drought. Because their complaints have so far gone unheeded, several thousand of them have been camping near the government building, in the heart of Bangkok, since January 25.

They initially got short shrift from the interior minister. Then the prime minister, General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, met their representatives and, to some extent, smoothed things over. Committees were set up to look into the demonstrators' grievances.

The poor from Korat are unhappy about the effects of dam building and deforestation, the environmental impact of government development projects, the fall in crop prices, the problems of shanty towns, and dangerous working conditions.

This is not the first time that poor Thais have demonstrated in front of the government building. Between 1992 and 1996 they used the same methods to appeal to two earlier governments. Joint committees were also set up. But, say the poor, it all came to nothing and they went home almost empty-handed.

This time their leaders are determined not to budge until they get their way. Bamrung Khayotha, secretary general of the Assembly of the Poor, said they would not allow the government to "try to gain time by forming committees as its predecessors did".

Chavalit, who has been in power for less than three months, could have done without this extra headache. Thailand's strong growth, which has helped to widen income differences, has slowed. The government's priority is to make budget cuts, defend the national currency, and find a way to reduce its large balance of payments deficit at a time when the growth rate has shrunk from double digits to around 6 per cent.

The Assembly of the Poor is not swayed by such arguments. "We're prepared to stay here indefinitely. We want concrete decisions," says Bamrung. Three weeks after their arrival, the poor look like staying put.

(February 13)

Piano lifts the lid on arts centre's future

Two decades on, one of the Pompidou Centre's architects is still adding to the original, write **Frédéric Edelmann** and **Emmanuel de Roux**

IT IS exactly 20 years since the Georges-Pompidou Centre opened its doors in Paris. The multicultural complex was designed by the Italian Renzo Piano and the Briton Richard Rogers. Since 1977, Piano has kept a fatherly eye on the centre (familiarly known as Beaubourg) from his practice in the nearby Marais district. Rogers has not lost interest in the building; it is just that the two men have gone their different ways while remaining friends.

Piano was aged 32 and Rogers 36 when their trail-blazing design won the architectural competition for the centre, which was the brainchild of President Pompidou. "For Rogers and myself, Beaubourg was a wonderful invitation to disobey the rules. We worked instinctively, more like 'naughty boys' than theoreticians, even if it meant we had to justify ourselves after the event. Commentators saw the project as a Utopian social vision, a triumph of technology. But I suspect it may have been a kind of technological parody."

Parody or not, Beaubourg marked a turning point for both Piano and Rogers. "When I started work on the centre, I was a builder; by the time it was completed, I had become an architect," Piano says. "By emphasising the iconoclastic element already present in the project and injecting a healthy dose of technology into the building itself, we helped remove the sacred aura surrounding any cultural establishment, which is intrinsically intimidating. The centre was likened to a factory or a refinery, and so much the better. The comparison made people curious."

Once he had completed work on what was his first building, Piano lost his bearings for a while. He spent three years drifting from one ecological architectural movement to another, as though he was trying to tear himself away from the dream represented by the Pompidou Centre. He worked for Unesco and on several projects that never saw the light of day.

Then he gradually got back on to the rails, notably with the De Menil Collection building in Houston, Texas. The sober clarity of its architecture showed that Piano, the son of a builder, had finally succeeded in combining classicism, lyricism and technical inventiveness.

Meanwhile Rogers continued to work more in the style of Beaubourg, relying on an element of wild fantasy that produced, among other things, the Lloyd's building in the City of London.

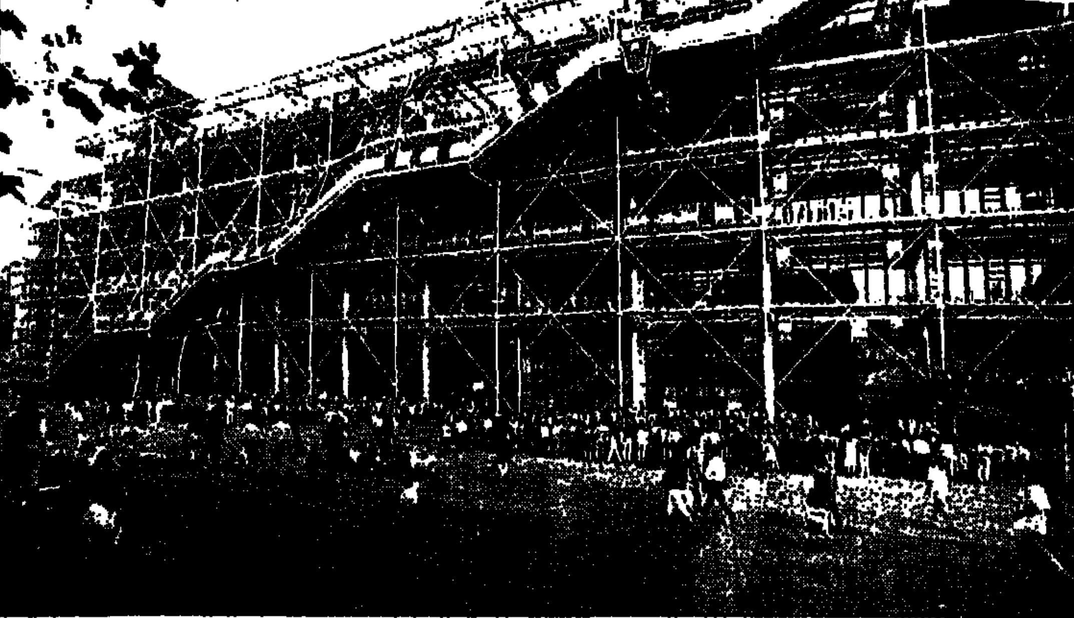
Beaubourg remains *their joint* creation, and they still *describe* it as such. But Rogers left *Piano* with the task of looking after *their* baby. It is difficult to think *of another* example where an *architect has* been required to keep watch *over* his building and monitor *the shifting* attitudes of successive *governments* towards it.

"*The building* is visited by 25,000 *people a day* instead of the 5,000 *initially expected*," Piano says. "In the *20 years* since it opened, it has had *150* million visitors. On the whole Beaubourg has done what it was supposed to do, and there has been no serious accident. But a rearrangement of its public areas had clearly become necessary."

Piano has added several extra elements since 1977, such as the Salle Garance cinema inside the centre and the Ircam tower, a beacon-like brick building just to the south.

Early budget restrictions meant that the centre's administrative offices, instead of occupying the neighbouring Quartier de l'Horloge as originally planned, were installed in a vast seven-metre-high space under the centre's roof which had not been intended for that purpose. That area will shortly perform the public cultural function for which it was designed and become an exhibition space.

After some six months' work with the Beaubourg team, Piano will now embark on a much more thoroughgoing transformation of the building. An initial phase has already been completed, with the "reconstruction" of Brancusi's studio, the repainting of the Rue de Renard façade, the building of a coach park (still apparently unknown to coach drivers), and a splendid enlargement of the piazza, the gently sloping area in front of the building, which now means that its façade and zigzagging escalator come fully into their own.



Crowd puller . . . The Pompidou Centre in Paris is visited by 25,000 people a day PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

The Atelier Brancusi has also allowed a flight of steps to link the northern side of the piazza with the Quartier de l'Horloge. On the edge of that Quartier, Ossip Zadkine's sculpture, Le Poète, will be replaced by Le Grand Assistant, a monumental piece by Max Ernst perched on a slender granite pedestal.

THE second phase of renovation will now get under way with a new lighting scheme for the building, devised by the architect Jacques Rouveyrollis — and with the virtually complete closing-down of the centre for 18 months.

Piano explains: "The building deserved to be given a breathing space after 20 years of continuous service. But, more importantly, a partial closing-down section by section would inevitably have lasted much longer — four years at least — and been twice as expensive."

The main task facing Piano is how to adapt the centre to an environment that has changed: "Beaubourg foreshadowed the transformation of public museums, which were still mostly fusty establishments at the end of the sixties. But it is an institution which must, in its turn, have a second think about its use of space, enlarge its exhibition areas, restructure the forum, which has performed its role fully on only two or three occasions, and work out a new relationship with the surrounding district."

Along with the relocation of offices and the enlargement of the museum, the most important work due to be carried out during Beaubourg's "sabbatical" will be the renovation of the foyer, which will become "a vast meeting area dedicated to non-specialisation, a contemporary expression of the Tower of Babel".

The future polymorphous reception area will include the present ground floor, its mezzanines and the basement, which will house film and video theatres and auditoria for live performance and lectures. Visitors entering the centre will be able to look down on to the basement through a large hold-like opening spanned by gangways. Piano's inspiration here has been the central squares of medieval Italian cities.

But what Piano is most excited about is the Atelier Brancusi, more of a museum than an artist's studio, which he describes as "a tiny but extremely complex project". The Atelier, which opened on January 28, gives pride of place to space and light, like his De Menil Collection building.

The problem Piano had to solve was how to respect, in spirit if not to the letter, the conditions laid down in the sculptor's bequest, which were that his studio in the Impasse Ronsin should be exhibited as he left it, complete with his works (whether finished or not) and his tools.

The French authorities originally interpreted the artist's wishes by building a rather hit-or-miss reconstruction of his studio in the Palais de Tokyo. A more faithful reconstruction was later erected in front of Beaubourg, but many of his works had to be removed in order to allow the public to walk around the studio. Even then, the mock studio remained cramped, and it was eventually closed down for that reason.

Piano's solution has been to build a museum around the studio, whose original dimensions he has respected. Some walls are replaced by glass partitions, around which visitors can walk and look at the sculptures.

"The danger was that by highlighting the object in its context we were going to encourage an anthropological approach to Brancusi the man, rather than focus on his *oeuvre*," says Piano. "We decided against that anthropological approach and deliberately created an art museum. On the other hand, we were extremely rigorous in our calculation of proportions and lighting."

Was this rationalisation of volumes not going to damage the the original spirit of the studio? "I think it manages to reconcile the Utopian 'why?' with the more concrete 'how?'. I don't think I've betrayed Brancusi's *oeuvre* by introducing a little order into the building so it can function even better and serve its purpose more fully." Piano's remark about Brancusi's studio no doubt also holds true for the Georges-Pompidou Centre as a whole.

(January 29)

French convicts get a taste of cinema

Catherine Bédarida

THE French actress and film director Josiane Balasko was wearing a grey polo-neck sweater, black satin trousers and orange trainers when she visited Muret prison in the suburbs of Toulouse.

She had come to present a couple of her films at the fifth Rencontres Cinématographiques de Muret, a festival organised by the Toulouse Cinémathèque. About 150 of the 600 prisoners who are currently serving long, and in some cases life, sentences at the prison got a chance to see Balasko in her twin role as actress and director in Les Hommes Préfèrent Les Grosses (Men Prefer Fat Women) and *Gazon Maudit* (French Twist).

When a young prisoner asked Balasko if, like Madonna in Evita, she might one day be tempted to play a historical character, she replied quick as a flash: "Yes, Joan of Arc — there's no reason why she should be monopolised by Le Pen."

Another prisoner wanted to know if the "joint" she smoked in Gazon Maudit was "a real one". She told him that "in the cinema, joints and glasses of wine are never real because there have to be seven or eight takes of each scene".

But he was not satisfied with this technical explanation: "Are you in favour of decriminalising soft drugs?" Balasko replied: "France is a country that allows the massive prescription of anti-depressants but bans hashish."

Ten Muret prisoners are studying for an audiovisual degree at Toulouse's Le Mirail university. They wanted to have Balasko's view on American films and the competition the cinema faces from television.

"Nowadays, in France, television co-produces most cinema films," she said. "With the help of the channels on cable, I'm able to see loads of films I'd never have seen otherwise. Television, like video, extends the life of feature films."

Prisoners greatly enjoyed the love scenes between Balasko and Victoria Abril in Gazon Maudit. "Can you imagine what our sex lives are like here?" one prisoner asked. "Nobody is allowed in to see us, whereas only 200km away, in Spain, prisoners have sex parlours where they can be with their wives for a few hours. Why don't you make a film on that subject?"

The presence of visitors gave prisoners a chance to voice various complaints. "Jail is just a factory that churns out homeless people — a criminal record is a psychological and social handicap," one prisoner said. "You have to do time, of course, but when it's all over you remain marked for the rest of your life. You have no civic rights. You can't get a job as a government employee.

"The Republic showed it could be flexible in 1946 and gave women the vote. Why can't it do the same now and scrap the system of criminal records?"

Then it was Balasko's turn to ask questions. How did they cope with the sheer length of their sentences? A multiple offender replied: "We turn over old memories in our minds so as not to notice all those empty hours. The moral and mental suffering gets worse as time goes on. Your personality ends up changing. You become increasingly listless."

And to applause from other prisoners, he added: "But the hardest bit has yet to come. I've already been released once. That moment when you come out of jail is the most terrible of all."

Balasko said she was struck by the prisoners' open-minded response to her films. "They don't have any preconceptions, they're just happy to have had a nice time. As I was listening to them, I wondered how I'd behave if I were behind bars," She promised she would tell her children about the day she spent at Muret prison.

(January 31)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

China Role in Clinton Funding Probed

Bob Woodward and Brian Duffy

A JUSTICE Department investigation into improper political fund-raising activities has uncovered evidence that representatives of the People's Republic of China sought to direct contributions from foreign sources to the Democratic National Committee before the 1996 presidential campaign, officials familiar with the inquiry said.

Sensitive intelligence information shows that the Chinese Embassy in Washington was used for planning contributions to the DNC, the sources said. Some information was obtained through electronic eavesdropping conducted by federal agencies.

The information gives the Justice Department inquiry what is known as a foreign counterintelligence component, elevating the seriousness of the fund-raising controversy, according to some officials.

The sources declined to provide details about the scope of the evidence relating to the alleged efforts by the Chinese representatives. They also declined to specify what foreign contributions might have been involved, but they said the new evidence now being scrutinized in the inquiry is serious.

A Chinese Embassy spokesman has denied that his government had anything to do with improper efforts to influence the administration. "We have done nothing of that sort," the spokesman said.

White House press secretary Michael McCurry said that "to the best of my knowledge, no one here had any knowledge of" the allegations concerning the Chinese. He said the White House would have no further comment.

The evidence relating to the Chinese government led Justice Department lawyers and FBI executives to increase the number of FBI agents working on a special investigative task force from a handful to 25, including several specialists in foreign counterintelligence investigations, sources said. Laura Ingersoll, a Justice Department attorney assigned a leading role on the fund-raising task force, has security clearance to investigate a variety of sensitive intelligence matters, officials said.

The new dimension to the fund-raising investigation could result in Attorney General Janet Reno eventually recommending that the matter be turned over to an independent counsel, according to one well-placed source. Reno, so far, has declined requests for an independent counsel.

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AT A D.N.C. COFFEE.

Some investigators suspected a Chinese connection to the current fund-raising scandal because several DNC contributors and major fund-raisers had ties to Beijing. Law-enforcement sources told The Washington Post that FBI agents are investigating whether the Chinese government tried to funnel money into the Democratic Party through fund-raisers John Huang and Charlie Yah Lin Trie. Both men are friends of the president. They have raised more than $1.8 million in contributions that have been returned because of questions about the sources of the funds.

Documents released last week show White House aides side-stepped or ignored warnings from the National Security Council staff about some contacts the president and vice president had with Asian American fund-raisers now under federal investigation.

In one case, a National Security Council official warned that a Democratic Party fund-raiser was "a hustler" trying to trade on his connections to President Clinton and Hillary Clinton, even presenting himself as a free-lance diplomat for the president. But White House aides allowed him into the Executive Mansion at least 10 more times.

The documents add to the picture of Democratic fund-raisers and donors appearing to exploit their White House ties. They also show that the White House consulted the NSC only sporadically about contacts the president had with foreigners tied to DNC fundraisers or donors.

John Pomfret in Agana, Guam, adds: In September 1995, Hillary Clinton stopped for several hours on this tiny tropical outpost in the Western Pacific, capping her visit with a shrimp-cocktail buffet hosted by the Island Gov. Carl T. Gutierrez, a Democrat.

The first lady's pit stop — made on her way to the United Nations women's conference in Beijing — kicked off the biggest political fund-raising effort ever on this trade-wind caressed chunk of American territory 6,100 miles west of California.

Three weeks after Hillary Clinton left, a Guam Democratic Party official arrived in Washington with more than $250,000 in campaign contributions. Within six months of that, Gutierrez and a small group of Guam businessmen had ponied up more than $132,000 for the Clinton-Gore re-election campaign and $510,000 in "soft-money" contributions to the DNC, making the island, with its 140,000 residents, the biggest donor to the Democratic Party per capita of any territory in the United States. Guam government employees also gave more to President Clinton's campaign than public servants in any other state or territory.

The contributions from Guam were followed late last year by signs of a significant and controversial change in the Clinton administration's policy toward the island, which will mark its centennial as a possession of the United States next year.

The campaign money raised in Guam is a drop in the stream of millions collected by the Democrats for the 1996 campaign. The Guam funds apparently are not the subject of a Justice Department investigation into improper campaign fund-raising. But the fact that the White House began to shift its policy on Guam after the island's governor organized a donation campaign for the president underscores concerns that the Clinton administration could be swayed by political contributions.

Canada Calls Halt to Panel On Somalia

Howard Schneider in Toronto

THE investigation of Canada's disastrous peacekeeping mission in Somalia has been derailed by "political interference" and will not be able to address whether top politicians and defense officials acted improperly, the head of the probe said last week.

Gilles Letourneau, a judge who for two years has led an often controversial public inquiry into the Somalia mission, said the government of Prime Minister Jean Chretien is shutting down the investigation before it has time to pursue one of the core concerns: whether there was a high-level attempt to cover up the torture and slaying of a Somali teenager by members of a now-disbanded Canadian airborne regiment.

The three-member inquiry panel was initiated by Chretien to investigate not only the 1993 killing, but also the events surrounding it, other incidents in which several Somalis were mistreated by Canadian peacekeeping forces, and whether more senior officials in the chain of command contributed to the problem.

Ordered by the government to end its work next month, Letourneau said the panel will have to leave unexamined the role of such officials as former prime minister Kim Campbell, who was defense minister at the time, and Robert Fowler, a deputy defense minister and current Canadian ambassador to the United Nations who has been accused of shredding at least one sensitive document.

Though government officials say the panel has had plenty of time to do its job, Letourneau said the investigation is being aborted at perhaps its most sensitive stage. The order for the commission to end its work "effectively precludes any investigation of coverup at the senior level," Letourneau said. "We were cut short as we were going up the ladder."

Letourneau said the commission needs until the end of the year to complete its work and could not rush through testimony given by Campbell, Fowler and others without risking a "whitewash." As a consequence, they will not be asked to testify.

FBI Lab Woes Jeopardise 50 Cases

Roberto Suro and Pierre Thomas

THE Justice Department has identified at least 50 criminal cases where evidentiary problems created by questionable forensic analysis at the FBI laboratory may have resulted in improper prosecutions, Deputy Attorney General Jamie S. Gorelick said last week, acknowledging that the number of problem cases could go higher.

Gorelick's announcement casts new doubt on the competence and credibility of the once-renowned FBI forensic facility. Just this month, FBI executives said no criminal cases had been compromised by the lab's problems.

Justice Department lawyers are reviewing hundreds of criminal prosecutions identified in a still-sealed inspector general's report on the lab to determine whether there is evidence from the FBI facility that should have been given to defense lawyers.

Gorelick said Justice Department lawyers had asked state and federal prosecutors in the 50 cases identified so far to determine whether the findings about the lab's problems should be made available to defense attorneys. The problems included poorly trained personnel and cramped quarters that may have led to contamination of evidence.

Separately, the judge presiding in the March 31 trial of Timothy James McVeigh, accused of blowing up the Oklahoma City federal building, ordered the Justice Department to give defense attorneys a copy of the inspector general's draft report on the lab, a move the lawyers say could help them defend their client.

Gorelick's announcement was the first time the Justice Department has identified a specific number of prosecutions that could be jeopardized by the problems in the FBI laboratory.

The FBI learned of serious inadequacies in the lab nearly a decade before the Justice Department inquiry documented failings there, but the bureau took action only when it was threatened with public exposure, according to FBI and congressional documents.

The FBI has long promoted its laboratory to Congress and the public as a paragon of professionalism and incorruptibility, but the documents, obtained by The Washington Post, show that outside experts have questioned its most basic practices since at least 1980.

By 1988, FBI officials were concerned enough about conditions in the laboratory that they commissioned a study that concluded that the facility needed to be relocated because its inadequacies could not be fixed by renovation, according to FBI budget documents.

Critics and some defense attorneys claim the lab investigation has so damaged the bureau's reputation that it threatens to erode the FBI's crime-fighting abilities.

"The FBI laboratory has always enjoyed such a fine reputation that prosecutors could present its reports confident that they had absolute credibility with juries," said Julie B. Aimen, co-chair of the committee on forensic science at the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. "Now it is no longer above reproach, and everything they have done over the past few years is going to be questioned when it is brought into a courtroom."

Some of the bureau's strongest supporters contend that the FBI's credibility now rests on the way it goes about identifying and correcting problems at the laboratory. Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman of the Judiciary subcommittee that oversees the FBI, said, "We must reestablish the confidence of the American public in federal law enforcement. The public trust in the FBI has been shaken."

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Astronauts Repair Hubble

William Harwood
In Cape Canaveral

NASA managers ordered the Discovery astronauts to mount a fifth, unplanned spacewalk on Monday to shore up cracked and peeling insulation on the Hubble Space Telescope discovered during last week's maintenance check by the space shuttle.

The observatory, one of the premier instruments of 20th-century science, is not in any immediate danger of overheating or suffering any other ill effects from the surprisingly tattered insulation.

But with Discovery's crew already on hand for a $350 million overhaul, managers decided to order additional repairs to help keep the observatory cool and healthy until the next shuttle servicing mission in 1999. More extensive repairs likely will be carried out then.

"We're doing the prudent thing," said program scientist Edward Weiler. "We have the time available. We've got a $2 billion investment here. Why take chances?"

And that's just for the telescope and its instruments. Throw in mission operations and other costs, and the nation's investment to date exceeds $3 billion.

Putting first things first, astronauts Gregory Harbaugh and Joseph Tanner floated into Discovery's cargo bay shortly before midnight last Sunday to complete the telescope's long-awaited overhaul by installing a new solar-array control system.

During three previous spacewalks, Harbaugh, Tanner, Mark Lee and Steven Smith installed two new science instruments, two data recorders, a new guidance system, a data-relay computer and other equipment to give the space telescope a new lease of life. The work went smoothly, and tests confirmed the new equipment was working properly, at least during the initial stages of checkout.

But shortly after Hubble was hauled aboard Discovery last week, engineers discovered extensive cracking in the multi-layer insulation protecting the telescope's upper-tube assembly, and several equipment bays where sensitive electronic systems are housed.

The damage was limited to one side of the telescope: the "hot side" that always faces the ultraviolet glare of the sun and is bombarded with atomic oxygen as it travels. This combination of UV radiation and erosion by atomic oxygen in the extreme upper atmosphere is believed to have caused the unexpected insulation cracks and widespread peeling. "Basically, this thing is just falling apart; it's cracking all over the place," Lee observed at one point. "To repair one particular spot would just totally open up a few more."

The insulation is needed to maintain a room-temperature environment inside the space telescope despite constant trips into and out of Earth's shadow and the fiery embrace of the sun.

Because the telescope was working as expected, with no signs of high temperatures before its capture by Discovery, engineers believe the insulation degradation is a slow process and not an immediate threat.

"I would be very comfortable flying away right now without having to make these repairs," Weiler said. "Because right now, we know when we fly away, we'd see no difference [in performance]. I can't say for sure, but we might go all the way to '99 without seeing a difference," he added. While NASA managers played down the significance of the issue, flight controllers told the astronauts the insulation problem "has many folks concerned. We are currently investigating potential repair options but concede that it will be a difficult task."

But Weiler said the decision to order an extra spacewalk was similar to the decision a homeowner faces after finding a few cracked shingles on a seven-year-old roof that is guaranteed for 15 years.

"Do you rush right out and put a new roof on? No," Weiler said. "Will the next rain storm cause Niagara Falls to come into the living room? Of course not. "The prudent thing would be to go up there, replace a few shingles, perhaps put some tar on and then perhaps three or four years later, replace the roof. . . . So I'm very comfortable. This is not an urgent matter."

Long view. . . The Hubble space telescope in the grasp of the remote manipulation system after its capture by the space shuttle Discovery

Struggle Reveals Weakness Of Ecuador's Democracy

ANALYSIS
Gabriel Escobar

IN THE crisis that ousted their president this month, Ecuadorans have loudly rejected what many of them saw as a democracy that was not working. Their uprising holds important lessons for other countries around the hemisphere and for the United States.

Throughout Latin America, protests have broken out not only over the pinch of market-economy reforms, but also over a variety of competing if not contradictory claims on government attention. In Ecuador, where President Abdala Bucaram headed a government regarded as particularly corrupt, these pressures pushed politics outside the framework of constitutional democracy and finally led a reluctant military back into its old role as final arbiter.

At stake here and elsewhere on the continent is the future of privatization and fiscal order, as competing interests use political tension to extract promises for contradictory agendas.

Caught in the middle is the United States, which did not question the election of an interim president by Congress — a move recognized by many as unconstitutional — and is now perceived here as having had an influential behind-the-scenes role in events that led to the leader of Congress, Fabian Alarcon, being appointed interim president after Vice President Rosalia Arteaga stepped down.

At the State Department last week, spokesman Nicholas Burns said the United States had not "played any major behind the scenes role." Another State Department official said the U.S. position has focused on finding "an Ecuadoran solution to an Ecuadoran problem" and that the problem for the United States was determining what was or was not constitutional.

Nevertheless, several observers here said the United States has had a difficult time with the crisis because it was unusual — the Congress dissolved the presidency and not the other way around — and because Bucaram's administration was perfect in many regards except a serious and possibly fatal one: corruption.

For more than a decade, the U.S. has placed democracy as the first criterion for the hemisphere, emphasized process over politicians and sold Latin America on free trade. Bucaram's election met these criteria and even exceeded expectations because he was moving on neo-liberal reforms at a fast clip compared to the snail's pace that has characterized Ecuador's five-year-old modernization efforts.

But over the last few years, corruption has also been high on the U.S. agenda for the region because privatization opened a new avenue for graft even as the sale of state-owned enterprises removed the institutional kind. With the ascension of Bucaram last August, the United States suddenly found itself with a democratically elected government that was implementing the economic policies it endorses but at the same time was so corrupt that the notion of democracy and even free market was suspect.

So pervasive was the problem that U.S. Ambassador Leslie Alexander, in an extraordinary speech a week before Bucaram was ousted, said Ecuador was "gaining a reputation for pervasive corruption."

The U.S. embassy had been planning the speech for months, but its delivery at a time when the national strike was set gave Bucaram's opposition a critical weapon. The State Department official said that was not the intent and that allegations of corruption "played no role" in the U.S. decision not to choose sides in the crisis.

But among some Ecuadorans, there is little doubt that the U.S. did not take sides when three presidents were vying for power last week — explicitly rejecting open support for the democratically-elected Bucaram — because his administration was corrupt.

Ecuador's democracy, like many others in the region, is not deep and lacks a coherent legal framework and no identifiable precedent. Conceived 18 years ago by a military regime, it is seriously flawed.

In addition, the 2 million people who marched against Bucaram during February 5's 48-hour national strike — the catalyst that led to the president's political demise — included so many competing interests that restoring democratic order to this now fractured country has become another serious crisis.

In Brief

THE United States and nearly 70 other countries have agreed to open up their telecommunications markets, paving the way for an unprecedented wave of competition in phone services worldwide.

The deal, reached last weekend at the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO) after more than a year of stop-and-start negotiating, will allow the highly competitive telecommunications giants of the United States and Europe to enter each others' markets, and will also permit them to invade many Third World markets where phone services have been controlled by inefficient, state-run monopolies.

Such intensified competition will reduce the cost of phone services dramatically in many developing countries. Even in the already-deregulated U.S. market, it will sharply lower the cost of making a call overseas, according to government and industry officials. In addition, it will create vast new opportunities for U.S. firms in the rapidly growing markets of Asia and Latin America.

The accord comes into effect next January, and experts said last weekend that consumers could begin seeing some price cuts on international long distance bills as early as next year.

However, it will likely take "several years" before the full impact of the accord is felt in the international marketplace, they said.

HOURS AFTER President Clinton blocked a potentially crippling pilots strike at American Airlines last weekend, the nation's second-largest carrier settled back to business as the White House and negotiators for both sides braced for the next stage of the contentious struggle.

Although his intervention surprised company executives and union leaders, aides said Clinton was persuaded that he had little choice, given the disruption that would have been created over a three-day weekend at an airline that carries one in five U.S. passengers.

But the 60-day cooling-off period ordered by Clinton may merely have postponed the showdown between American and the Allied Pilots Association.

A three-member presidential emergency board now has 30 days to hear both sides present their positions and then make a recommendation for a settlement. If either side turns down the recommendation, the two sides have to wait another 30 days before the union is free to strike again.

An American official, speaking on condition he would not be identified, said the airline is confident it has a better case than the pilots, with the two main issues centering on how much they should be paid and whether American's pilots or those of its commuter subsidiary, American Eagle, should fly new regional jets the airline wants to buy.

SEEKING to preserve good relations with an important Asian ally, the State Department has notified Congress that Thailand has effectively sealed its border with Cambodia and shut down a massive clandestine logging traffic that has denuded Cambodian forests.

The report was surprisingly unequivocal, considering numerous reports from environmental groups and journalists that illicit timber exports continue from Cambodia to Thailand, and that senior officials of both governments profit from them. One congressional aide said it would be "a miracle" if the report were accurate.

The State Department based its conclusion on a tour of the border last month, and critics said it would be easy for the traffic to resume once the inspection was complete.

By law, the Clinton administration would have been required to cut off most aid to Bankok, and all aid to the Thai military, if it found Thailand continued to tolerate or encourage commerce that aided Cambodia's communist Khmer Rouge rebels. U.S. aid to Thailand is modest — about $4.6 million this year — but a cutoff would have disrupted relations with an important economic and political partner in Southeast Asia.

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Bonn Probes Depths Of Racist Passions

New confessions reveal that town elders backed the neo-Nazi torching of an immigrants' hostel. **William Drozdiak** reports from Dolgenbrodt



Bedsteads lie in the burnt remains of a hostel for asylum seekers at Eberswalde in eastern Germany in 1992, one of a number set ablaze in a wave of attacks by suspected neo-Nazis PHOTOGRAPH: BERND SETTNIK

WHEN FIRE engulfed a resort complex here four years ago that was designated as housing for Third World asylum seekers, many people assumed it was just another ugly manifestation of xenophobic hatred perpetrated by skinheads and right-wing radicals.

Across Germany, a spate of fire-bombings in 1992 and 1993 against foreigners seeking asylum had generated revulsion and anxiety about what seemed to be growing racial intolerance. While deploring such acts, German commentators minimized their impact by stressing that the crimes were carried out by fringe elements of society — and as if to underscore the point, a young neo-Nazi named Silvio Jackowski was arrested on arson charges for setting the fire here in Dolgenbrodt.

But Jackowski's eventual confession, following years of legal maneuvers, has unmasked a wider conspiracy of silence that has shocked the country, prompting fresh examination of the depth of anti-foreigner sentiment in Germany.

This month, several city fathers of this lakeside village 30 miles south of Berlin have confessed that they provided "financial and logistical support" to the young neo-Nazi and an accomplice. Villagers paid the arsonists $7,300 and supplied them with bottles filled with heating oil and gasoline to set the house ablaze.

In addition, prosecutors are now looking into whether a Berlin real estate agency that wanted to purchase the resort complex and convert it into a posh rehabilitation clinic — before its plans were overruled by a Brandenburg state decision to establish the foreigners' residence — may have supported the arson attempt.

The case has provided a chilling reminder of how otherwise respectable burghers who applauded the burning of immigrant residences in towns such as Hoyerswerda, Moelln and Solingen during the wave of attacks may not be such an isolated minority.

Rather than shame, the villagers of Dolgenbrodt have expressed anger and dismay toward state authorities who, they say, made a stupid decision to base foreigners in their midst — and thus compelled them to take drastic measures to protect their community from an invasion by Third World refugees.

"Look, we are a small village of 300 inhabitants that lives off tourists visiting our lake. How are we supposed to react when the state tells us to find room for 86 Gypsies or Africans?" said Karl Pfannenschwarz, the mayor of Dolgenbrodt, during an interview at his villa, which once was the weekend retreat of the interior minister of what was then East Germany.

"We were all frightened. We had no idea what kind of people would be coming here. It was terribly unwise to think foreigners could live here," Pfannenschwarz said. "We have no supermarket, no jobs for them to do. But I would call it a fear of crime rather than of foreigners. If you wanted to bring some Bosnian women and children here, that would be OK. But not a bunch of Gypsies or Africans who would do nothing but steal and cause trouble."

Thomas Oste, a flower shop owner who lives next-door to the burned-out building, has confessed to making several large cash payments to Jackowski to pay for the arson and to buy his silence. He told police that he could not bear the thought of living next to a group of asylum seekers, and said he found a lot of sympathy in the village.

Oste said he solicited help from several friends, who were happy to help him collect the explosive materials and find people — Jackowski and a skinhead friend named Renato — to set fire to the home. But a number of other questions have raised potential leads that police and prosecutors acknowledge could steer the case in more controversial directions.

Police investigators say they are wondering where the florist found the cash to make the payoffs. They are also intrigued that a deputy to then-Mayor Ute Preissler has been named as the person who assembled the molotov cocktails used in the attack.

According to court records, Preissler was strongly advocating a proposal by Berlin real estate mogul Lothar Poetschke as the solution to Dolgenbrodt's problems. Poetschke offered to pay $600,000 for the resort complex with the idea of building a medical rehabilitation clinic that Preissler believed would greatly bolster the village's fortunes.

When a local petition drive failed and the Brandenburg state authorities refused to rescind their decision to set up the asylum seekers' residence, Preissler panicked. According to court testimony by Poetschke's secretary, Preissler phoned the real estate agency a day before the arson attack and demanded urgent action. "Those foreigners must not be allowed to come. We have to do whatever is necessary to stop them," he was quoted as saying.

In an interview, Brandenburg Deputy Prosecutor Eugen Larres said, "For the time being, we have no concrete evidence" that the former mayor or the real estate agent participated in the conspiracy to commit arson. But he said the investigation is continuing and will scrutinize "all those people who may have possessed a motive" to see the immigrant residence destroyed.

Artifacts Find May Rewrite the Americas' Prehistory

Curt Suplee

THE Americas were inhabited by human beings at least as early as 12,500 years ago — far earlier and a half a world farther south than previously believed — a team of archaeologists announced last week.

Artifacts unearthed at a site near Monte Verde, Chile, the nine-member group determined, predate by at least 1,300 years the evidence of human habitation from Clovis, New Mexico, conventionally accepted as the oldest known in the Western Hemisphere.

But more portentous is the fact that the discovery is in South America, thousands of miles away from the Clovis site. That suggests that the first Asian immigrants arrived by a different path from the one traditionally assumed (across what is now the Bering Strait) or got there much earlier than the current scientific consensus allows, or both. Indeed, the Monte Verde dig also has revealed preliminary evidence that Homo sapiens may have been in residence there as long as 33,000 years ago.

"It totally changes how we think of the prehistory of America," said Monte Verde team member Dennis J. Stanford of the Smithsonian Institution. "Our models clearly are not right," he said, and the new results "open up a whole new time period for people to investigate."

Since 1977, researchers headed by Tom D. Dillehay of the University of Kentucky have been excavating the riverbed site some 500 miles south of Chile's capital, Santiago. They discovered remnants of dwellings with wooden frames and animal-hide roofs, tools made of stick and bone, a piece of what is apparently mastodon meat, more than 700 stone tools and a child's footprint.

When recent dating of the excavation (using an accurate method that depends on the rate at which radioactive forms of carbon decay) indicated an age in excess of 12,000 years, many scientists expressed grave doubt. So in January, a consortium of sponsors — including the National Geographic Society and the Dallas (Texas) Museum of Natural History — sent the nine-member team down to investigate the controversial site.

Among them were several prominent skeptics, including Dena F. Dincauze of the University of Massachusetts and C. Vance Haynes Jr. of the University of Arizona. After 10 days, the group unanimously endorsed the Monte Verde find. Dincauze last week told a news conference at the Dallas museum that the work was "a kind of paradigm-buster" and "a new benchmark in knowledge." Haynes said from his Arizona office that the site was clearly valid, with many artifacts that are "indisputably" human in origin.

The Clovis record has stood since the late 1930s, though numerous contenders for evidence of earlier human habitation have arisen. Until now, none had proved convincing to a majority of scientists. Flakes of rock initially thought to be stone tools were shown to have cracked naturally, for example, or specimens thought to be from the site were found to have traveled there later.

One major advantage of the Monte Verde site, Dillehay said in Dallas, was that shortly after habitation the area was covered with a peat bog, ensuring preservation of a wide variety of evidence. "There are, for example, stakes that are still lashed in place with string that is knotted," said Alex W. Barker, chief curator of the Dallas museum.

Homo sapiens may have been residing in Chile as long as 33,000 years ago

At a minimum, the new find will oblige scholars to reconsider the standard explanation of what Dillehay called "the first chapter of human history in the Americas."

The accepted theory is that restless prehistoric peoples from northeastern Asia managed to migrate into Alaska when global cooling trapped ocean water in glaciers, thus lowering the sea level and exposing enough of the Bering Strait sea floor to provide a land bridge. This hypothesis also requires that there have been an ice-free corridor — formed between two retreating ice masses — that would have allowed the first New World humans to survive a trek southward through the Yukon. Both essential conditions for this climatic "window" existed about 14,000 to 12,000 years ago.

So when scientists first dated the Clovis artifacts (typically stone "points" used to kill mammoths or other animals) to about 11,200 years ago, the chronology seemed ideal. Presumably, the first settlers crossed the land bridge on schedule and their descendants then took about a thousand years to get as far south as New Mexico.

The new findings make this notion far less tenable. If the Monte Verde site is 12,500 years old, that means that the ancestors of those Chilean settlers somehow managed to travel some 10,000 miles from the Bering Strait to southern South America in only a few hundred years.

In short, said Stanford, curator of North American archaeology and director of the paleoindian program at the National Museum of Natural History, "they either had to go like hell to get to South America, or they simply came in earlier." Climate data and other evidence show that the next earlier window of migratory opportunity existed about 22,000 years ago.

Alternatively, many experts speculate, the early Asian immigrants may not have traveled by land at all. Instead, they may have gone by boat, hugging the shoreline all the way from Alaska to Chile. The closing of the Bering Strait, Stanford said, would have caused a backup of seawater nutrients and ocean life in the North Pacific that might have given early nautical explorers an ample food source.

But the real date of the first arrival of Homo sapiens in the Americas may be far earlier than any consensus theory now permits. The Monte Verde team has found a second, deeper layer of putative human artifacts that can be reliably dated at 33,000 years old. The evidence so far is tentative, though Stanford said that "most of [the nine-member team] thought it looked pretty good." Dillehay's group is continuing its excavation.

Meanwhile, Stanford said, the Monte Verde results will likely revive flagging research interest in many other putative pre-Clovis sites, including the Meadowcroft Rockshelter in Pennsylvania, which has yielded stone tools and basketry that are estimated to be more than 19,000 years old.

The $3 billion copper caper

Will trial lawyers ever get to the bottom of the great metal mystery? **Paul Murphy** and **Lina Saigol** report

IN ALL probability, Yasuo Hamanaka is Kangoku Yuki. That is Japanese for "going down". The betting is that the rogue trader who has cost the Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo almost $3 billion by attempting to corner the world copper market over 10 years faces three to five years behind bars.

Whether Hamanaka, who pleaded guilty on Monday at the start of his trial for fraud and forgery in Tokyo, is planning to take anyone else down with him is unclear. He is due to be sentenced on March 10.

Sumitomo has always insisted that its former star metals trader pulled off the biggest scam in the history of financial markets single-handedly and without the knowledge of his superiors. This statement has been met with incredulity in Tokyo, as well as in London and New York, where Hamanaka carried out the bulk of his allegedly unauthorised trades.

But on the first day of the trial it was alleged that the Tokyo representative of Winchester Commodities, a British metals broker, paid $120,000 in cash to Hamanaka. Responding to the allegations, a spokesman for Winchester said that all payments were in "the ordinary course of business".

A year has passed since the Guardian began a series of articles about Winchester Commodities, based in the provincial city of the same name. Winchester's principals, Charles Vincent and Ashley Levett, were making dramatic profits by trading in copper. They had paid themselves $40 million apiece over two years, and their activities were being investigated by the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), the City regulator charged with keeping financial traders in check.

It soon became apparent that this was no localised, technical City inquiry. The Securities and Investments Board (SIB) — London's premier financial regulator — seemed to be looking in detail at the London Metal Exchange (LME) and at almost everyone who had any dealings there. American regulators, in the form of the Commodities and Futures Trading Commission, were involved as well. This was a serious matter.

No one wanted to discuss what, exactly, was going on — not publicly, at least. The LME wanted to maintain its privacy. This was a market used by professionals whose business was not of any public interest. Newspaper articles citing rumours of financial jiggery-pokery were "malicious" and "irresponsible", according to the chief executive David King. "There had been no manipulation of the copper market," declared the chairman, Raj [now Lord] Bagri.

Sumitomo Corporation meanwhile was maintaining radio silence. In particular, it did not want to talk about a transaction codenamed "Radr" — a deal struck in 1993 which involved up to 20 per cent of the world's annual production of copper, and which appeared to be structured so that Winchester would bank a $40 million profit at a stroke.

Only in June last year did Sumitomo "discover" Hamanaka's dealings. Losses were put at $1.6 billion, then $2.6 billion. He was said to have carried out unauthorised trades over a 10-year period.

The price of copper crashed. In London, the LME protested that Hamanaka's suspect business was carried out "off market" by traders who did not fall under its jurisdiction. The SIB decided it would be best, however, to carry out a full, six-month review of the market.

In the meantime, colourful stories began to emerge. A month before Sumitomo had gone public with its shame, British regulators had orchestrated a police raid in the offshore haven of Guernsey. Interest centred on an office block in St Peter's Port that housed dozens of "brass plate" companies, and the activities of an accountant named Ian Tickler.

The case was handed to the Serious Fraud Office while, on the other side of the Atlantic, both financial regulators and the FBI were investigating US broking firms with links to Hamanaka, such as Global Metals. The authorities suspected a conspiracy, spanning three continents, to manipulate the world's metals markets.

Winchester Commodities meanwhile had been under investigation by the SFA for three years — Dan Simon, one of the watchdog's junior investigators, stumbled across the Radr transaction while taking a general look at the firm's affairs.



Guilty, but will Yasuo Hamanaka reveal all? PHOTOGRAPH AP

His investigation spread to the "Codelco scandal" of 1994, in which the Chilean state copper agency lost $200 million through the actions of its "rogue trader", Juan Pablo Davila. Again, Winchester was involved. Digging deeper, Mr Simon is said to have come across links between Winchester and several offshore companies, many of which were in Guernsey and fell under the control of Ian Tickler.

The investigation culminated in the Guernsey raids of May last year, but by that time Mr Vincent — now known as Copperfingers — and Mr Levett had taken the "lifestyle" decision to move to Monaco. They have continued to protest their innocence, and have their lawyers ready to enforce their right to fair treatment.

Winchester is quick to point out that the SFA spent two years reviewing the Radr transaction, but finally said it would be taking no action. The same goes for the business it transacted with Codelco. But many questions remain. How did Hamanaka get away with it for so long, and why was he trying to keep the price of copper artificially high in the first place?

The Tokyo prosecutor's hit rate is 95 per cent-plus, but it has some other high-profile cases active, including direct corruption charges against certain politicians. The view is that the copper case will not be widened to explain who exactly Hamanaka dealt with in Western financial markets, and why.

In Britain, the SIB has finished its review of the LME and recommended a few tweaks to trading and regulatory procedures. Lord Bagri and Mr King have kept their jobs.

Meanwhile the SFO investigation grinds on, and attempts by those being investigated to bring the whole thing to a halt are being stepped up. Earlier this month, George Staple, the head of the SFO, was facing a contempt ruling over how a search warrant at an obscure accountancy firm was executed.

Hamanaka has a lot to answer for. He has set a copper-and-robbers riddle which may never be solved.

In Brief

OIL conglomerate Shell roared to record profits last year thanks to a strong oil price, rising sales and a recovery in its chemical business. The group reported pre-tax profits of $17.8 billion, up 36 per cent, from sales which rose 18 per cent to $133.6 billion.

SHARES in international telecom companies — including British Telecom and Cable & Wireless — faltered as markets reacted to a deregulation deal thrashed out by the World Trade Organisation in Geneva. There is concern about the short-term effect on profits of the expected acceleration of the move towards lower international call charges. Charges could fall by up to 80 per cent as a result of the deal.

THE Korean oil industry plans to invest $1 billion in British North Sea oilfields over the next three years, as part of a long-term strategy to build up oil reserves.

THE world's leading sports companies have launched a campaign to stop the use of child labour in making footballs in Pakistan, after allegations during Euro 96 that children as young as six were making balls sold as official merchandise.

AMID applause from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones broke through the 7,000-barrier to close up 60.81 points at 7022.44 last week, and mark the fastest 1,000-point rise in the index's history.

UNILEVER, the consumer goods group, accelerated the debate over Europe after its chairman, Niall FitzGerald, warned that the company would reconsider its future investments in the UK if Britain failed to join in the European single currency project.

LLOYDS TSB reported a 52 per cent rise in pre-tax profits of $4 billion, fuelled by falling bad debt provision and consumer demand for mortgages and retail banking services.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates February 17	Sterling rates February 10
Australia	2.1069-2.1092	2.1565-2.1592
Austria	19.32-19.34	19.02-19.05
Belgium	56.67-56.76	55.77-55.87
Canada	2.1846-2.1871	2.2060-2.2082
Denmark	10.47-10.47	10.30-10.31
France	9.26-9.27	9.12-9.13
Germany	2.7468-2.7486	2.7041-2.7074
Hong Kong	12.52-12.53	12.64-12.65
Ireland	1.0251-1.0267	1.0183-1.0202
Italy	2,711-2,713	2,657-2,661
Japan	201.08-201.29	200.52-200.74
Netherlands	3.0828-3.0849	3.0369-3.0395
New Zealand	2.3301-2.3328	2.3866-2.3898
Norway	10.91-10.92	10.70-10.71
Portugal	275.75-276.03	271.60-271.83
Spain	232.21-232.36	228.68-228.95
Sweden	11.99-12.01	11.99-12.01
Switzerland	2.3924-2.3948	2.3310-2.3340
USA	1.6164-1.6174	1.6329-1.6339
ECU	1.4116-1.4135	1.3933-1.3948

FTSE 100 Share Index up 30.1 at 4337.8. FTSE 250 Index up 9.9 at 4606.8. Gold up $3.00 at $344.85.

Computers deliver billion-dollar profits

Jack Schofield

SALES of personal computers grew by 16 per cent to 68.4 million last year, according to research firm International Data Corporation (IDC).

Compaq led, shipping 7 million PCs, ahead of IBM, which shipped 6.1 million. Packard Bell-NEC and Apple, in third and fourth places, both lost ground. Packard Bell shipped slightly fewer machines at 4.2 million units, while Apple's shipments fell from 4.6 to 3.6 million. Hewlett-Packard, in fifth place, increased by 48 per cent to 3 million.

Dataquest has produced similar figures, except that it estimates the world market grew by almost 18 per cent to reach 70.9 million machines. Either way, this was the first year since 1991 that PC sales have not grown by at least 20 per cent. IDC blames the slowdown on a slump in Germany, the world's third largest market for PCs.

The PC industry's growth was reflected in companies' results. In the year to December 31, Compaq's revenues grew by 23 per cent to $18.1 billion, while its profits jumped 65 per cent to $1.3 billion. In the Christmas quarter, Compaq's turnover grew by 15 per cent to $5.4 billion, and Gateway's by 24 per cent to $1.6 billion.

Apple's turnover, however, slumped by 32 per cent to $2.1 billion, which resulted in a loss of $120 million.

In the software market, IDC said sales of operating systems grew by 9.6 per cent to 74.8 million units, excluding upgrades. This was less than the 15.6 per cent growth that had been predicted. Microsoft's Windows 95 was the market leader, accounting for 62.9 per cent of shipments.

Microsoft's quarterly turnover rose by 22 per cent to $2.7 billion, and its profits by 29 per cent to $740 million. Intel did even better: its turnover grew by 41 per cent to $6.4 billion and its profits by 120 per cent to $1.9 billion.

The Unix market grew by 12 per cent to $34.3 billion in 1996. The leading suppliers were Sun ($6.7 billion), Hewlett-Packard ($6.6 billion) and IBM ($5.5 billion).

IBM, by far the industry's largest company, posted mixed results, with a decline in revenues from mainframes cancelling out growth in software and services. For the year, IBM's turnover grew by 6 per cent to $75.9 billion, with profits hitting $5.4 billion.

IBM and Microsoft ended their latest quarters with vast sums in the bank and shares that had roughly doubled in value, leading both to propose two-for-one stock splits.

IBM had $8 billion in cash, even after spending $6 billion buying its own shares. Microsoft had $9 billion and nothing to spend it on.

In the old days, choosing a vice-chancellor was simple: universities consulted the Great and the Good, and a scholarly chap got the nod. But now new methods like headhunting are taking over, and they are casting a far wider net, writes **Simon Midgley**

Deep VC fishing

THE LOT of a vice-chancellor in contemporary academia is not an altogether happy one. Universities are under more pressure than ever to recruit bright students, attract high-flying academics, maximise research income and achieve prominent public profiles.

Despite this, however, university vice-chancellorships — with salaries running up to six figures — are still highly prestigious and much sought after. But how do you go about landing one? In the old days it was simple. Universities consulted the Great and the Good about likely up and coming chaps and one waited, usually in vain, for that discreet word in one's ear.

With the advent of more enlightened times universities started advertising. This did not, however, mean that those who applied were ever seriously considered. If you were brash enough to apply you clearly did not understand how British academia worked.

Today things are no longer quite so straightforward. Clearly some of those who apply for vice-chancellorships are now seriously considered and a few have even been known to be appointed.

As mould-shattering, however, is the fact that universities — both old and new — are now consulting headhunters to help them find new vice-chancellors.

In recent years the universities of Westminster, Greenwich, Anglia Polytechnic University and Bournemouth have used the services of the recruitment specialist NB Selection. The University of East Anglia was assisted by Saxton and Bampfylde to help it lure Elizabeth Esteve-Coll from the Victoria and Albert Museum. The latter firm has also helped with appointments at South Bank and Southampton.

So what has happened? In the past, vice-chancellorships were given to distinguished academics with some managerial experience, although senior civil servants have also stood a chance.

In an increasingly inclement financial climate many universities, however, are no longer certain that making a traditional academic appointment is the right course for organisations hungry for commercial and industrial research funds.

The other thing that happened was that when the old polytechnics became universities in 1992 they brought with them governing bodies made up almost entirely of lay, non-academic representatives from the local business community who did not have a network of contacts in the academic world.

These lay governors often used headhunters in their own business affairs, and therefore found it both expedient and natural to seek their help when appointing a vice-chancellor.

This contrasts starkly with the position of the older pre-1992 universities where in almost every case the appointment has to be made by either the university council in consultation with the academic senate or by a joint committee of the lay members of the council and academic members of the senate.

The involvement of academics in the selection process brings with it a natural inclination to appoint a distinguished scholar, a breadth of knowledge about who is who in academia and a honed sense of who might or might not be a suitable candidate.

If you want to be a vice-chancellor in an old university then you should still let one of the Great and the Good know.

THE emergence of headhunting firms has upset this rather cosy apple cart in so far as it has widened the net of potential appointees to include unpredictable dark horses from outside the closed world of academia. The likes of NB Selection and Saxton and Bampfylde conduct their own executive searches and consult their own networks of the Great and Good. Confusingly, it is no longer so clear which network of the Great and the Good it is now prudent to consult.

That said, while there have been some unconventional appointments in recent years — such as Elizabeth Esteve-Coll and Mike Malone-Lee, a former deputy secretary in the Lord Chancellor's Department, to Anglia polytechnic university — many of the contemporary appointments in the old and the new universities have been conventionally academic.

Whichever route is chosen — with or without headhunters — a job or person specification is drawn up, an advert is placed, and old and sometimes new networks are consulted.

The job description will relate to the culture and history of the university. Oxford Brookes university, which is seeking a successor to its vice-chancellor who retires this Easter, is looking for a good manager who will be comfortable with that institution's particular mix of modular learning, participative and devolved management style and equal opportunities culture.

Its appointments procedure is not typical of the new universities. It drew up both job and person specifications after wide consultation with the university community.

Assisted by the recruitment search firm NB Selection, it has also appointed a representative university committee to make its appointment.

When a shortlist has been finalised — from a long list of around 12, which was drawn from an initial trawl of more than 200 names — candidates will be invited to visit Oxford for formal and informal interviews with representative university groups and to attend a getting-to-know-you social evening. Candidates will also have to make a presentation about their vision for the institution's future to an intimidatingly large university audience.

Michael Paulson-Ellis, registrar at the University of East Anglia, which is now seeking a successor to Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, says that its criteria for a vice-chancellor include someone who can command intellectual respect and be sympathetic to the ethos of a research-intensive university.

SUCH a person should also be able to "guide the organisation in an uncertain environment" and must be able constructively to knit together executive and academic decision-making to find the right balance between centralisation and decentralisation.

Irrespective of what the job specifications say, however, be warned.

One insider says: "On the whole, universities do not know what they are looking for. They may start off the exercise saying 'we are looking for this kind of person' but eventually they look around and find out who is out there and settle for somebody often quite different."

Another senior university figure says what universities really want, irrespective of what the job description says, "is a highly distinguished research scholar who has got masses of contacts, preferably including lots of political contacts, who is extremely good at gladhanding the Lord Mayor and everybody in the local community, is jolly good on a public platform, can keep the senate in order and charm lots of donors into giving the university money".

A third university administrator says: "What you really want is God and if he has an FRS after his name that is even better." Good luck!

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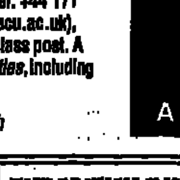
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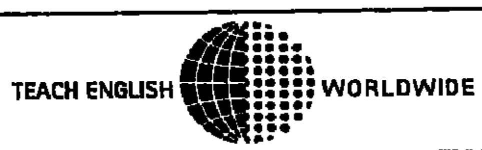
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You will need a relevant postgraduate degree; 7 to 8 years work experience including African field level experience of research in either the social or natural sciences; excellent writing and presentation skills in both English and French and the ability to work both independently and in collaboration with others. The post will require about 4 months travel in Africa and Europe and will be based at our Edinburgh office.

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Letter from Geneva Prue Hopkins Hall

Reality bites an ordered society

I NEVER like to pass someone trying to make a buck in the streets and when I came across a man selling copies of Issue, the magazine for the homeless, I stopped. I didn't have any change, so I gave him a 20-franc note. It wasn't until I was on my way again that I realised he'd short-changed me by 5 francs. This previously unheard of behaviour for Switzerland surprised me. So, on my way back, I told him. He just grinned, displaying a mouthful of gold teeth, and said: "But Madam you *gave* me the money." Laughing, I walked on my way. Even the homeless are entrepreneurs in Geneva.

The incident started off a train of thought. Although I've more or less come to accept that when in London or New York I'll see homeless people begging and dossing down all over the city, I still haven't got used to the increasing numbers of beggars and down and outs in Switzerland. This is not the only indication that the rot has finally set in here too. In fact the Swiss are fast losing their glossy image of a well-heeled, highly-principled, neutral and well-organised society.

Last year was a difficult year all round. The country sank deeper into economic recession. Fair play and neutrality are no longer the order of the day. Companies and private citizens are going bankrupt, the housing market is stagnant after taking a massive nosedive, shops are closing, agricultural subsidies have been reduced and mad cow disease has hit the meat industry. Bills no longer get paid on time. Migrant workers have been sent packing and unemployment is on the rise.

Whilst the television news gets bleaker every day, the Swiss response to the problems is astonishing. They increase medical insurance premiums for families who are already strapped for cash, they close down factories, lay off workers, reduce salaries and put up prices — not because they are running into debt, mind you, but because they aren't making enough profit. What's more, they never admit they got it wrong. Demonstrations and strikes are becoming commonplace as an increasingly rebellious and sceptical public tries to make its dissatisfaction heard.

Not only is the economy faltering but the fabric of society shows signs of unravelling too. Crime is on the increase. Not so long ago, you could go shopping and leave your front door open. Not any more. Burglaries abound. In the building where I live, three flats were broken into in a day. Drugs are freely available on the streets of Geneva and dazed addicts mix with stylishly turned out shoppers on the smart Quai de Mont Blanc. One student in three drops out of university and youngsters looking for an apprenticeship either have to accept what little there is on offer or stay unemployed.

If all this wasn't enough, Swiss banking integrity has taken a bashing recently. Who would have thought that Swiss bankers would be accused of concealing billions of francs and gold belonging to victims of the holocaust? The managing director of the Union Bank of Switzerland, one of the largest, described the amount of money stashed away as "peanuts" at the beginning of 1996. Since then more and more information "leaks" have fuelled suspicions that huge sums are involved. But still they refuse to admit to the enormity of the scandal.

And another thing. The public's confidence in the police was rocked a few weeks ago when television cameras revealed third degree burns on the legs and thighs of Swiss farmers who were sprayed with a mixture of water and chemicals during a peaceful demonstration in Bern.

The Swiss people's woes tended not to intrude on my daily life but lately it has been impossible to ignore them. As an expatriate living and working in the United Nations system, there's very little I can do except sympathise from a distance. After 20 years of living in Switzerland, I still don't have the right to vote. The only way of obtaining it would be to become a Swiss citizen by paying a prohibitive percentage of my savings or annual salary for the privilege. So I observe the upheaval and am saddened by the unwelcome signs that Switzerland is finally joining the 20th century — just in time for the 21st.



Glen Finglas on the Woodland's Trust estate, bought with lottery cash PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Rob Roy's forest to be reborn

Paul Brown

WHEN Rob Roy drove his cattle through Glen Finglas it was still clan country and clad in forest. Centuries earlier, William Wallace used the same trees as cover when he and his rebels took on the English Crown.

That was before the Highland clearances, when crofters were driven from the land and sheep began nibbling at the native forest. What remains of it clings to boulders or is found in gulleys where sheep cannot reach.

But these old trees are to provide the seeds to give Scotland back its ancient deciduous forest, at least in 10,000 acres of the Trossachs owned by the Glen Finglas estate.

This historic area in the foothills of the Highlands has been brought by the Woodland Trust, courtesy of a £1.4 million National Lottery grant. In what must be the longest restoration project in Britain, the trust expects to spend another £1.3 million of lottery money to begin a 40-year programme to re-establish trees. In another two centuries the forest should have returned to its former glory.

Andrew Bachell, the operations manager, said: "You cannot regenerate a forest overnight, especially in the mountains where trees grow slowly. We have begun to remove the sheep and some deer. We expect to see new seedlings within a year."

On the edges of the estate are rows of non-native Forestry Commission conifers, but next to them is one long strip of birch trees. The commission fenced off this stretch of land 30 years ago. It now has a dense growth of birch, which seeded itself.

The estate is seven miles long and its highest point, Ben Lechi, is above the treeline at 1,000m. Seeds from native deciduous trees will have to be planted on lower hillsides denuded by the sheep, where natural re-seeding would take too long. Alder, rowan and birch still have a hold in patches, but holly, oak, ash and willow will need extra help.

When the trust bought the estate it had 3,800 sheep, 200 cattle and a lot of wild deer. "We do not intend to remove all the livestock or cover the whole estate in trees," said Mr Bachell. "We already have eagles and black grouse, and we want more of them and to keep native mammals.

"We will have open spaces so people can enjoy the magnificent views. This landscape needs perspective. The native forest would not cover all the area anyway, especially the mountain tops. In any case, the crofters would have cleared land for animals and for timber. We expect to continue to run a farm here, especially with native cattle."

On the lower areas of the estate, where trees grow fastest, are some large oak and ash trees. Many more will be planted for some commercial forestry. "We have to think about our financial future," Mr Bachell said.

The trust's emphasis on unrestricted public access to all its woodlands means an increase in the 20,000 visitors a year who walk the drovers' road through the estate. The ancient track runs across the mountains to Balquhidder, where Rob Roy is buried.

Brig o'Turk, with its tea shop and pub, is on the route and inside the estate. The trust wants to promote employment without swamping the village with cars. Negotiations are underway to keep them well away from its single, narrow street.

The public's love affair with trees has meant phenomenal growth for the Woodland Trust — it has doubled in size every four year since its foundation 25 years ago.

Public access to all 800 woods the charity owns is a primary objective, and John James, the chief executive, believes it is one reason for the charity's remarkable success. The work of the trust is little known. However, the devotion of its 60,000 members and the cash they give for acquisitions accounts for the growth.

"Among our greatest supporters are Noel Edmonds and Lord Lichfield, who seem to display a real devotion. In other ways they are completely different, but both are nuts about trees," Mr James said.

Notes and Queries Joseph Harker

***ARE** natural "will-o'-the-wisp" ever seen these days? How does self-combustion of the methane take place?*

WILL-O'-THE-WISPS occur as methane in bubbles or marsh gas rises to the surface of a swamp and burns spontaneously in the air. Fermentations in the absence of air can produce hydrides of other non-metal elements including "bad-eggs gas" (hydrogen sulphide) and phosphine, which is spontaneously flammable when mixed with oxygen. The phosphorus necessary to produce phosphine could come from dead fish decaying among the other vegetable detritus at the bottom of a swamp or pond. But so many ponds and swamps have been drained now that the conditions for suitable fermentations to produce will-o'-the-wisp gases are rare. — *Roderick Sykes, Haute-Garonne, France*

***IS THERE** any truth in the claim that warm or hot water freezes faster than cold water?*

YES, boiling water will freeze faster than room-temperature water if evaporation is allowed (eg, with open containers) because sufficient mass is lost from the increased evaporation to compensate for the higher starting temperature.

For further information, see http://www.urbanlegends.com/science. — *Dr Richard Balthazor, Upper Atmosphere Modelling Group, University of Sheffield*

***I UNDERSTAND** the Hungarian and Finnish languages are related because the two peoples share a common origin somewhere east of the Urals. Where?*

FINNISH and Hungarian are members of the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic languages. Some dozen or so are still spoken in some countries bordering the Urals. Estonian and Lappish also belong to this group. Scholars disagree on dates but around 4,000BC a group of hunters from the Siberian lands beyond the Urals split, with the Finno group going towards the Baltic and the Ugric group moving towards Hungary, becoming nomadic herdsmen through contact with Turkic peoples. The presence of words of Turkish origin in today's Hungarian leads to the assumption that Finno-Ugric can be linked with other languages of central Asia. — *Jean Fowlds, Luton, Bedfordshire*

***ARE** there any names that I am not allowed to use if I want to change my name by deed poll?*

YOU can't change your name by deed poll whatever your solicitor and others may lead you to believe. In law your name is what you are known by (legitimately including aliases — for example, pen names, stage names, women using both married and maiden names). A deed poll is only a formal declaration of intent, but it has no relevance if you use a different name in practice.

Say your name is John Smith. You go into a solicitor's office and execute a deed poll "changing" your name to Elvis Presley. If you continue to sign your cheques "John Smith", your name is still "John Smith"; if you start signing them "Cliff Richard" then your name is Cliff Richard. Of course, you need to be consistent, and the bank and the Inland Revenue will require evidence that you really are the person known as what you say you are. — *Dr J B Post, Axbridge, Somerset*

Any answers?

***WHY** is the Royal Navy known as "The Andrew"? — K C Batcheler, Cambridge*

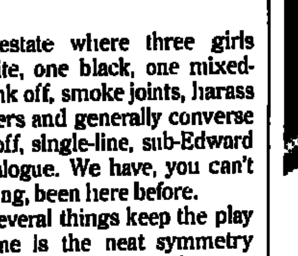
***IS THERE** any documented evidence that Hitler and Stalin ever personally murdered anyone? — Nishi Asahigaoka, Nara Ken, Japan*

***ON MY** computer I can discard old files to make memory available for new data. My brain contains a lot of unwanted information. Is there any way in which I can re-use these brain cells for more useful things? — John Bell, London*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Readers with access to the Internet can respond to Notes & Queries via http://nq.guardian.co.uk

All spliffs and tiffs

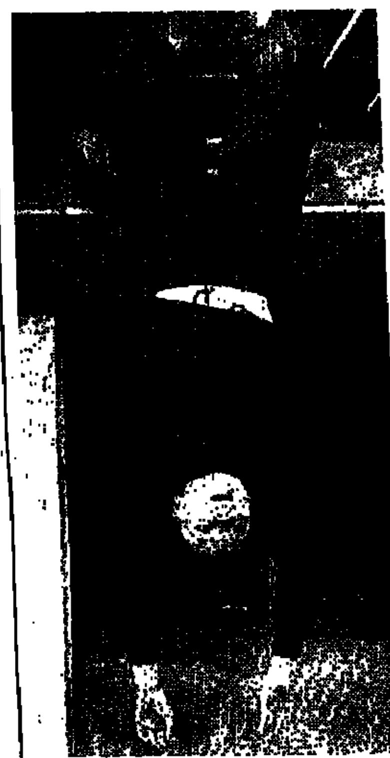
THEATRE
Michael Billington



"LET age approve of youth," said Browning. That's not difficult when the Royal Court, in its two spaces at the Ambassadors in London's West End, offers plays as intriguing as **Backpay** by 23-year-old Tamantha Hammerschlag and Cockroach, Who? by 25-year-old Jess Walters. If I preferred the former, it is because it gets away from the familiar British urban nightmare.

Hammerschlag's heroine, Mina, is a bemused, confused 20-year-old white South African who goes to Soweto to visit her ex-nanny, Sophie. Touting her liberal credentials and rejecting her own "kaffir"-hating mum, Mina is searching for something she cannot find in her own culture. She is fascinated by Sophie's family and falls for her student son, Bafana, but no sooner has she been impregnated by him than she finds herself abandoned. Left in a state of splenetic isolation, she turns, as in childhood, to Sophie as a surrogate mum.

The plotting is sometimes a bit arbitrary: Bafana turns overnight from sexual puritan to heartless seducer. But what the play reveals, with exceptional maturity, is the emotional dependence of a whole white generation on their former servants — an irony Brecht would have relished. Mina and her tribe



Just hanging around: Nicola Stapleton in Cockroach, Who?

may live in the white suburbs, but their hearts are in the black townships, and the key question, raised by Hammerschlag with tart subtlety, is whether their exploited servants really want them back.

Director Mary Peate allows the play's politics to emerge through the human relationships. These are fleshed out with great skill by Diane O'Kelly, who has something of Harriet Walter's classy charm, as the muddled Mina, and by Dona Croll as the scowling but tolerant Sophie. More, please, from Hammerschlag — she explains a lot about South Africa's unresolved tensions.

After this, Jess Walters's **Cockroach, Who?** whisks us back to a world that seems almost too familiar from the theatre: a south London council estate where three girls (one white, one black, one mixed-race) bunk off, smoke joints, harass their elders and generally converse in sawn-off, single-line, sub-Edward Bond dialogue. We have, you can't help feeling, been here before.

Still, several things keep the play fresh. One is the neat symmetry whereby the three teenage lives are echoed by those of three mutually supportive tea-swilling, fag-smoking old girls who seem to live in the launderette. Another is a touching scene in which the generations finally meet. Tough little Natasha (a swaggering Nicola Stapleton, who played the hardboiled Mandy in EastEnders) has just lost her dad and is visited in her bedroom by kindly Lilly (the marvellous Miriam Karlin), who pierces the protective shell and gets her to admit her capacity for affection, even if only for a dead pigeon. A lovely bit of writing that catches the strange bond that often exists between the extremes of youth and age.

Walters clearly reports what she knows. She also conveys the shifting loyalties and subterranean sexual desires of teenage girls. Caroline Hall, as director, keeps the action flowing. I just hope that now Walters has explored the world of spliffs, tiffs and female solidarity in derelict south London, she will next take a big imaginative leap — even if it's only north of the Thames.

Is there an ingrained anti-Semitism in British life? What are the ingredients of Jewish humour? Do fathers and daughters enjoy an emotionally incestuous closeness? Those are some of the topics fuelling Arnold Wesker's flawed but fascinating **When God Wanted A Son**, written in 1986 and now getting its belated premiere at Hampstead's New End Theatre.

Wesker explores big issues through just three characters. Martha is a Gentile separated from her Jewish-academic husband and now playing the stock market. Her monastic privacy is invaded first by her daughter Connie who is a struggling, somewhat screwed-up alternative comic, and then by her husband, Joshua, who has just lost his Cambridge job and who wants her to finance a project that would enable him to detect human character through vocal inflections.

Wesker's ideas are intriguing, but it is hard to believe in the basic reality of his family. How, you wonder, did the autodidactic, proudly Jewish Joshua ever come to marry the anti-Semitic, Protestant Martha in the first place? It looks simply like a marriage of dramatic convenience.

Wesker asks us to swallow quite a lot. Yet he captures very well the peculiar intimacy of a father-daughter relationship based on jokes, Jewishness and mutual adoration: it is clearly no accident that Joshua has been sacked for allegedly seducing a student of his daughter's generation. Running through the play is also a strong vein of comic irony that sees everything as game for ridicule. Without condoning Martha's Gentile rigidity or lapsing into stereotypes, Wesker implies that there is an instinctive Jewish response to life, based on fearlessness and disrespect, that makes mixed marriages problematic.

The truth of this is debatable; and you could argue Wesker draws general conclusions from a rather extreme set of characters. But the play has a genuine intellectual vitality that keeps the audience on its toes.

Talking heads . . . Kenneth Branagh as Hamlet in a star-studded rendition of Shakespeare's play

There's nothing like a Dane

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

IF SHAKESPEARE on screen is defiantly in fashion, a word-for-word rendition of Hamlet hardly qualifies as an easy option. Two hundred and forty-two minutes is a long time to sit in the cinema. The question is, will enough people think the experience worth it?

They should. There are three main reasons. The first is that it turns out to be a positive pleasure to see at least one Shakespeare play complete on the screen, even if one knows that, were the Bard alive, he would almost certainly have cut it.

Time and again, the fact that it is all there allows one to see the play with greater clarity and to measure it against the film's bold interpretation, which sets Hamlet in the 19th century and has Blenheim Palace doubling as Elsinore.

The second reason to see it lies in the casting, which shrewdly allows you to count the stars as they pop up, but also contains some performances that are very good indeed. I was not surprised, for instance, at the quality of Derek Jacobi's Claudius. But I had not expected that kind of work from such as Billy Crystal as the Grave-digger. There are less certain performances, and one or two poor ones. But in general the cast is distinguished.

The third reason is that the film is in 70mm, which accentuates its epic grandeur, even if it does not make its more intimate moments any easier to traverse. It is also shot with great skill by Alex Thomson and impressively designed and costumed by Tim Harvey and Alexandra Byrne.

These points in a very long film's favour are balanced by some disadvantages. Branagh directs with less fidgeting about than he did with Dead Again or Much Ado About Nothing. But, in consequence, the film occasionally seems like constipated David Lean. Fluidity is not its strong point. And sometimes the joins show.

Another problem occurs just because there are so many stars in the film (in order to pull in the crowds?). Some of them can barely manage it. The great Jack Lemmon, for example, is an uncertain Marcellus, which is one reason why Brian Blessed's ghost scene goes for almost nothing. Gérard Depardieu makes a most peculiar Reynaldo, hunched in his chair and looking rather like a giant and puzzled sloth; and I'm sorry to say that Robin Williams's daft Osric ought to be shot and decently buried.

On the credit side, there is not only Jacobi, who invests Claudius with a politician's guilty guile, but also Julie Christie's Gertrude — possibly the best, most mature performance she has ever given us on screen. And Kate Winslet is a fine Ophelia. She brings a formidable feeling of mounting vulnerability to the part — and she gets a sex scene. Charlton Heston is outstanding as the Player King, speaking his lines with dignity and real understanding, and Richard Briers is a very fine Polonius — not at all the usual shuffling idiot, paced for comedy.

As for Branagh's Hamlet, the performance has one great advantage. He speaks the lines as clearly as I've ever heard them, and with a real sense that anyone who is not an outright Schwarzenegger fan ought to understand them. If this is not the most intellectual of princes, the impression given is of a man of action forced into introspection and cursing the need to be careful with his plotting.

Even if Branagh gives a passable imitation of a Hollywood swashbuckler swinging from ropes during the final duel, the performance is direct and strong, if not perhaps as good as it could have been had he not been behind the cameras as well as in front. You once or twice get the sense that he's going through his paces rather than attempting to beat his previous marks in the part. On the whole, then, and with the proviso that it might be wise to take a cushion, Hamlet is well worth seeing.

Rosenkavalier without a hitch

OPERA
Martin Kettle

ENGLISH National Opera's Der Rosenkavalier is easily the most enjoyable night at the opera to be had in London right now. Every bar illustrates why Strauss's brilliant score has found the unchallengeable place in the repertoire that continues to elude Pfitzner's Palestrina, written at much the same time and recently premiered at Covent Garden. In the hands of a skilled conductor such as David Atherton it comes up as exciting and fresh as ever.

Jonathan Miller's 1994 production, sharply revived now by David Ritch, moves the action forward from 1750 to 1900. The idea starts painlessly but works with diminishing effect as the opera progresses, and the sting of Baron Ochs in the final act is dramatically disjointed — if the entire thing, including the set, is a trick, then how come Leopold doesn't spill the beans to his father?

The principal new adornment of a very strong cast is Yvonne Kenny's first Marschallin. Scrupulously sung, with exceptional attention to text, this is already a very substantial achievement and will get even better when she can command the big moments with a little less inhibition.

Susan Parry is scarcely less impressive in a vocally and physically convincing debut as Octavian, and with John Tomlinson repeating his irrepressible (but a touch too sympathetic) Ochs, this is a Rosenkavalier without a weak link.

Rosemary Joshua stood in for Donna Brown as Sophie on the first night, and in a string of good performances in the minor roles, John Graham-Hall as Valzacchi and Bonaventura Bottone as the Italian Tenor stood out. An evening to reassure the Coliseum doubters.

Animal magic

ART
Adrian Searle

ON HIS back, like a terrified beetle in a black suit, lies a man, grounded on the page of one of Paula Rego's old sketchbooks. He's scrabbling at the air, like Gregor Samsa, who woke up to find he'd turned into an insect in Kafka's Metamorphosis. Rego has taken a 1953 sketchbook from its cabinet in her Tate Liverpool retrospective and turns the pages. "This one is shitting," she says. "This one, vomiting."

Towards the end, we come suddenly to a page decorated by the artist's young daughter, which is covered in stick-men, faint crayon scrawls, childish hieroglyphs.

The notebook comes from the period when Rego was a student at the Slade. It is a flick-book of cruel comedies and humiliations, interlarded with charcoal vignettes: bag-eyed Portuguese spaghetti-suckers, smokers, oyster-sucking topers. The style recalls the sharp-suited, round-shouldered international cartoon manner of the 1950s, quite at odds with the Slade's dreary Euston Road teachings of the time, but totally in keeping with the Portuguese-born artist's enduring preoccupations.

Rego's work, as this exhibition demonstrates, is a theatre of cruelties, a Sadeian carnival, a comedy of psycho-sexual terrors. Oddly, Rego makes the unconscionable acceptable, and her images of murderesses, dog-fondling adolescent girls, children flirting with their fathers and donkeys having sex rarely raise objection. If they'd been depicted by a man, there'd be an uproar.

But Rego is a popular artist. Her work appeals to literary types: the open-ended narratives, unencumbered with the baggage of obtuse art theory or worries about the status of paintings as objects, come dressed in traditionalist, aesthetically conservative garb.



Toying with taboos . . . Paula Rego's sketch depicts little girls doing something with animals — or toys?

This Liverpool show, on until April 13, covers Rego's entire career. It is a trawl through familiar territory. What counts, with Rego, is her subject matter, and her skills are always at the service of a clarity of depiction. A certain reticence, even a conservatism, in her technique seems almost inevitable. Indeed, it adds to her appeal, sugars the bitter pill of the stories she tells.

This, partly, is what distinguishes her: Rego manages her subjects — her focus on love and fear, power and subjugation, terror and transgression — with empathy, sympathy and wit, even when she describes forbidden fantasies, plays with taboos, celebrates the Freud family romance.

Paula Rego identifies three major turning points in her career. The first was her introduction of collage, and her discovery of Dubuffet in the late 1950s ushered in a period in which her paintings writhed with decorative disgust — Portuguese dictator Salazar vomiting his country in a monstrous bacchanale of entrail-sprouting, eviscerated figures; the feral dogs of Barcelona, fed on poisoned steaks.

Her second move, after a fallow period of around 15 years, came with the introduction of direct, playful drawing in which a cast of animals act out human dramas. During the 1980s these colourful, ultra-violent, mocking parodies of life became more and more baroque and operatic. Rego, emerging from psychotherapy, took our stock situations and archetypes and turned them into a deranged burlesque.

This was the work that won Rego her audience. During the later 1980s her work began to delve more heavily into her own childhood, mixing memories of Portugal with invented stories, the half-remembered with the purely fictional.

Rego's move from paint to pastel in her more recent works, although it marks a further emphasis towards illustration, enlivens and aerates the surface of her work enormously.

One image, which never got worked up into her large 1993 painting of a pipe-puffing female artist in her studio, depicts little girls having some kind of congress with a goat and a donkey. The creatures are benign and lovable, in a Winnie the Pooh kind of way, but Ernest Shepard would have been horrified. If the animal is some kind of toy, we need not be concerned. If it is real, the image is shocking — unless, of course, it is only a fairy story. These kinds of confusions go to the heart of a child's fantasies and expectations of the world, and show us something of the roots of our own, adult confusions. It is a funny, light, daunting and shocking image. But then, if images can't be shocking, there would be little point to them, or indeed to art at all.

If Rego were a novelist, no one would balk at her subject matter. That they are carefully constructed images gives them an altogether different kind of weight and power. Rego illustrates the sexuality of children, the infantilism and neediness of middle-aged men, murderous thoughts, dastardly deeds, unactable fantasies, but does so with — another taboo word — such charm, that we hardly blink.

Pushing and shoving to get into Baryshnikov's shoes

Judith Mackrell on the rise of the Royal Ballet's rogue, 'Teddy' Kumakawa

WHEN Twyla Tharp made Push Comes To Shove for Mikhail Baryshnikov in 1976 it was a love letter from a modern choreographer to one of the greatest classical virtuosos of the century. Baryshnikov, two years out of the Kirov, had been raised to dance princes, and when Tharp began working with him she raided his technique for its elegant footwork, fabulously speedy pirouettes and huge, aristocratic jump.

But the character she created for him was not a prince — it was an adorable punk, an extravagant, comic version of the off-stage Misha — and her choreography turned the certainties of his classical technique inside out. It pushed his balance way off-centre, it made him syncopate his rhythms, turn in his feet and waggle his hips. As she's written, it turned "Apollo into Astaire". In crossing these two great dance cultures — classical and modern — Tharp created one of the most coveted of male roles. Every man who's fancied his jump aspires to dance this outrageous showstopper. Yet in the past 20 years only three or four have been given permission.

Tetsuya 'Teddy' Kumakawa

Tetsuya Kumakawa — Teddy to everyone he dances with — was only 10 when he first saw Baryshnikov performing Push on Japanese television. He'd started dance classes the vague way kids often do but when he saw Push he sat up and thought, "I want to do that some day". Baryshnikov became his hero. He says: "I absolutely adored him, the way he moved and the life he lived," and he remained Kumakawa's idol as the latter's own career advanced towards stardom. In 1989 Kumakawa joined the Royal Ballet. He was the first Japanese dancer to be signed up, and was almost immediately promoted to dancing solo roles. Last year, when Tharp was in town creating Mr Worldly Wise for the company, Kumakawa told her how much he'd always liked Push. Tharp took the hint and Kumakawa finally got to make his debut in the ballet last week.

Offstage, Kumakawa's shrug is a study in lazy fatalism, and he gently flaps away conversation if it becomes too taxing. Onstage he appears to have no nerves. Kumakawa's jumps lift off the ground with the acceleration of a jet while his pirouettes are so defiant of normal motion they provoke screeches from the audience.

Push is a ballet made in heaven for him, as its lead role is rarely out of the spotlight. Watching Kumakawa rehearse it's clear how naturally he takes to the choreography. He spins off a string of turns with his head cocked rakishly over one shoulder, his jumps slice the air, his eyes narrow, his hips snake, his feet pounce noiselessly like a boxer.

But though the movement may come easily, doesn't Kumakawa feel as if he's stepping into another man's shoes? Tharp not only made the ballet on Baryshnikov's body and technique, she also fed personal mannerisms into the movement, like the distinctive way he brushed back his hair. Kumakawa admits that he's had to stop watching the video of Baryshnikov because "I'm trying not to be like him", but says in the end it's not an issue — "I'm really dancing for myself."

Kumakawa knows that he owes a lot to Baryshnikov's lack of height. Traditionally, short male dancers used to be relegated to character parts. But not only did Baryshnikov dance the whole repertoire, he also had some wonderful roles created for him. "I really appreciate that he was a dancer before me. If Misha hadn't been there, there would be fewer ballets for me."

Dukes and dipsticks

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

THE Earl of Radnor, asked why he did not want to open Longford Castle to the public, explained, "They would make it smell." This penultimate programme of **The Aristocracy** (BBC2) was called Letting In The Hoi Polloi.

This series has a repertory company of recurring peers. Some could use the money (Lord Wolseley), some could use the publicity (Duke of Devonshire), some are bounders of a sorbo resilience (do you take me for a fool?).

The man who first let down the drawbridge and the *hoi polloi* in was the Duke of Bedford, showing a flair for entertainment which would have made Barnum and Bailey clutch each other, whimpering. He was unfailingly affable. In America on a will-the-real-duke-stand-up quiz, he was asked his motto and replied, quite truthfully, *Che sera sera*. As that was a Doris Day hit at the time, he was rejected as an impostor.

The shoulder-shrugging fatalism of his motto was quite alien to him. It was fascinating to see which peers, under the assault of death duties, retained the predatory genes which won the title in the first place.

The Duke of Devonshire was forced to give one of his three Rembrandts to the nation in lieu of death duties. The one, it later turned out, that was only School of Rembrandt.

The Marquess of Hartford, a Woosterish figure with butter-coloured hair and a long cigarette holder, jumped through flaming hoops on water skis to amuse visitors. A metaphor of what many aristocrats had to do.

Meanwhile James Lee Milne toured the stately homes for the National Trust taking, like John West, the best. And leaving, as a byproduct, one of the great diaries. Most of his hosts were exhilaratingly eccentric. "Lady Sybil Grant wore an orange bonnet draped with an orange scarf. She had orange hair and her lips are the vividest orange I have ever beheld. She took me to the orangery where she lives all the time." (Pastel woolly pullovers, I notice, are still *de rigueur* with the better sort of lord.)

Half the charm of **The Wizard of the North** (BBC 1), Omnibus's appreciation of Sir Walter Scott, lay in Patricia and Jean, Scott's great, great, great grand-daughters. They live in his house, Abbotsford, and put flesh on his bones.

"Lindy! Lindy! She doesn't really like the floor in here. Perhaps it's a little too cold for her." A West Highland terrier skittered into the marble hall. You saw Lindy's point of view. Abbotsford, a mock castle, is not what you'd call homely. It clanks with armour, battleaxes, thumbscrews and swords.

Scott was crippled by polio as a child. A degree of disability is by no means a bad thing for an author. All his romantic energy folded in on itself. He virtually invented Scotland. His merriest wheeze — from our point of view — was to persuade the perfectly circular Prince Regent to wear a kilt.

The cost of Abbotsford killed him. When his publisher failed, he sat down grimly to write his way out of a £4 million debt. Patricia half thinks she sees him sitting there still. Half thinks he sees her.

Poetic justice

Piers Paul Read

As If
by Blake Morrison
Granta Books 245pp £14.99

THE horrors unearthed in Gloucester's Cromwell Street have not erased the shock of the murder of four-year-old James Bulger in 1993: it remains, writes Blake Morrison, "like a watermark on the psyche, a shadow across the heart", principally because the murderers of the toddler were themselves children, Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, both aged 10.

Morrison, a poet, covered their trial in Preston for a magazine (we are not told which) and now, three-and-a-half years later, publishes his impression of the trial and reflections on the crime. He arrives at the Crown Court "expecting an answer to the question everyone wanted answering: Why?", but finds this is neither asked nor answered. The only issues before the court are whether Thompson and Venables killed Jamie Bulger, and whether, if they did, they knew right from wrong.

Disappointed in this narrow remit of the lawyers and expert witnesses, Morrison begins to wonder "if it's worth being in court at all". Rather than seek an answer to the riddle in the evidence, he turns to his own memories of childhood in West Yorkshire, and to his own role as a parent in South London.

To admirers of his earlier work, When Did You Last See Your Father?, the reminiscences will bring renewed delight. He drives across the Pennines to visit his mother, now in a wheelchair. He opens a wardrobe door and is assailed by the "old familiar smells: mothballs and mustiness and mother". He remembers how he would climb in "and snoozle down among the scents from her furs and ballgowns". Later, he recalls another cupboard where he and his friends molested a drunk 14-year-old girl. With an unrelenting honesty, Morrison trawls his past and present for clues to the 10-year-olds' crime. "I don't think we can understand these boys and what they did unless we look within, at our own lives."

This method has its shortcomings. From the start it seems improbable that the son of middle-class doctors will have much in common with the two urchins from broken homes. As a result, one gets the impression at times that the author is more interested in himself than in his subjects — about whom he can find, in reality, little to say.

There was a suspicion, never proved, that James Bulger may have been the victim of some kind of sexual assault. This leads Morrison to muse upon his own feelings for his children. "Is a father allowed to miss his children *physically*? Should I feel guilty if I do?" He teases the reader by opening a chapter with what at first seems to be a seduction, later to reveal that he is describing putting his daughter to bed. "A child in my lap, being read to, and I find myself erect. Love of children. It's not supposed to be to do with sex. It isn't to do with sex. I have no desire to have sex with my child, with any child, but this feeling is something like desire."

Honest, perhaps, but what has this to do with the Why? Morrison thinks with great precision about himself but, when it comes to his hunt for a credible motive for the boys' crime, hopes to hit his quarry with a scatter-gun technique. Some of the pellets hit their mark. He recognises that stepchildren are a particular target for molestation, and that abortion has lowered the whole nation's respect for life. "A murdered foetus: not to be equated with a murdered child. And yet, and yet." Most accurate, in my view, is the hypothesis that James Bulger was the victim of Robert Thompson's sibling loathing for his recently born half-brother.

"If I'd wanted to kill a baby," Robert said to the police, "I'd kill my own, wouldn't I?" No, because his only sense of belonging was to his dreadful family, his clan.

Morrison might have made more of this, but it remains just one among many conjectures. "Fathers or lack of fathers. A factor in the Bulger case, another Why." In fact, a major Wherefore. But Morrison no sooner touches on psychological or social factors that, if treated in depth, might provide an answer, than he takes us back to his own childhood in Yorkshire or down to his home in London. "The trial has . . . failed to give us Why," he writes. "The Sun and the Star and the Mirror will have to do the job instead."

It is this resignation that will disappoint the reader: the hope upon opening As If is precisely that the poet would solve a riddle. But sensibility, which Morrison has in abundance, is no substitute for wisdom. Indeed, there are times when it seems an actual impediment to understanding. His images are fine but somehow too fine. The high-pitched desperation in Jon Venables's voice on the tape played in court is "like a mother lapwing whose cries and mock-tumbles are meant to lead intruders from the nest".



In memoriam . . . James Bulger's funeral PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS THOMOND

It is the same with his style: beautifully modulated, with fresh images, at times employing a stream-of-consciousness technique, and so poetic that involuntarily the reader makes verse of the prose.

At Euston I catch the train back
north,
not sure if it's sagging to be in
Preston,
or sagging to come home.
No escape from children either way.
Two are there in court all day,
and at night I fret about my own.

There is no harm in that; one is lulled by the rhythms; until one suspects that meaning is sometimes distorted for a fine phrase. "The future won't forgive us for this — won't forgive us our lack of forgiveness. The future will think us childish for how we thought about children." This sounds fine but is it true? Given the scrupulosity of the recent Children's Act, it is fatuous to suggest that we think *childishly* about children. For want of any other culprit, he turns on the legal establishment, saying that the trial was only staged to placate public opinion, and that "it was wicked to have paraded the [boys], for nearly a month, in an adult court . . ."

He may be right on this narrow question, but his compassion for the two young murderers does not make up for his lack of understanding. Without doubt, Morrison is a fine writer, but he answers no questions and suggests no solutions.

This book is available at a special discount price of £11.99 from Books@The Guardian Weekly

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

On the Origins of War, by Donald Kagan (Pimlico, £15)

AS WE all know, we live in a time of unparalleled prosperity, on the threshold of a civilisation characterised by perpetual peace and progress. So why should we need a book telling us about the origins of war? As a historical curio? Ah, but no. For the conditions outlined above, as Kagan reminds us, were exactly the same just before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War and the first world war. And anyway, there are plenty of smaller wars going on at the moment, to keep our hands in; there always have been. "In 1968," writes Kagan, "Will and Ariel Durant calculated that there had been only 268 years free of war in the previous 3,421." So here are the origins of wars — along with a dissertation on the Cuban missile crisis. It has an almost chilling unity of tone and purpose, and his insights and observations seem unarguable.

Torture, by Edward Peters (University of Pennsylvania Press, £15.95)

MY, I am a happy camper this week. Here's another book to make you glad to be a member of the human race. Even better: this is the "expanded edition" (as it cheerily announces on the front cover) of a book first published in 1985. Its expansion is not, you will have gathered, a function of our abandonment of torture as judicial practice. Anyway, a cold legal history of torture, considerably enlightening. Funny, I carried this book prominently on a crowded train and had no trouble finding a seat.

Normal Service Won't Be Resumed, by Robyn Williams (Allen & Unwin, £7.99)

WILLIAMS, late of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, has written a book lamenting the decline of public service broadcasting. So what? Well, he used to work at the BBC and devotes a long and fascinating chapter to the problems it faces, and will face. (When the aftershocks of BBC upheavals are felt on the other side of the world, then you know something is wrong.) Writes pugnaciously and knows his onions. Therefore delivers an achingly depressing prognosis.

Why do women write more letters than they post?, by Darian Leader (Faber, £6.99)

VERY charming, intelligent pop-psychology about the difference between men and women. So we have not just the dilemma of the title, but the answers to such bewildering questions as: Why do some men, "instead of going to get a cup of tea . . . go to get a cup of tea and say 'I'm going to get a cup of tea' "? And why do some people persistently cheat on Tube fares? (Why, unresolved castration anxieties — I'm amazed you even had to ask.)

Fawning over a feudal leftover

Natasha Walter

Princess Margaret: A Biography
by Theo Aronson
Michael O'Mara 336pp £16.99

BRITANNIA AIRLINES recently withdrew its royal service, saying that the word royal "no longer has any positive connections". Despite recent royal antics, in many ways Princess Margaret is the best example of the failings of the modern royal family.

It is not just that they are a drain on the state, a pointless leftover of feudal society. It is also that they lack taste, grace and interest. Let us not forget that Private Eye started calling the Queen Brenda and Princess Margaret Yvonne long before Diana had thrown herself downstairs. Another term of endearment, Priceless Margarine, was apparently coined by John Lennon, and suits her even better.

Although no recent royal has been as keen to hold on to his or her flimsy status as Priceless Margarine, the real snobs could not stand her. Nancy Mitford, with her sharp eye and sharp tongue, took her apart in 1959: "She looked like a huge ball of fur on two well-developed legs. Shortest dress I ever saw — a Frenchman said it begins so low and ends so soon. In fact the whole appearance was excessively common."

Theo Aronson tells us that Margarine broke through the philistinism of the royal family, its dowdiness and its lack of glamour, by being "sophisticated", "outré", and "cultured". But what, quite, did her culture and glamour consist of? Going to musicals: she saw Kismet five times; hanging out with the sunburnt Eurotrash on Mustique, and, after her brief burst of butterfly beauty in her early 20's, sticking firmly to the least flattering colours and garments that she could find. "Looking splendid in green," runs the caption to one photograph here, in which poor Margarine is seen with turquoise feathers sprouting from her head, a puff-sleeved turquoise jacket and a large-collared shirt swirled in pink and cobalt and aqua.

There is nothing here that is not already known; she loved and she lost; she loved and lost again; she drank gin and tonic in the morning, she drank whisky at night, she opened hospitals, she was rude to her betters.

The best anecdote in this volume comes from Michael Holroyd. He had heard, apparently, about her love of mimicking the Goon character Bluebottle. So, at a lunch party, he "dutifully screamed with laughter, and even banged the table in admiration, on hearing what he took to be his hostess's Bluebottle impersonation. Unfortunately, the princess had been speaking in her normal voice."

Apart from such moments of fun, this is a bad book. Theo Aronson is hardly a great stylist or an impressive researcher. A mixture of bitchiness and fawning characterises his prose, as it characterises most popular coverage of the royal family. How long, we groan, how long can the royal family be propped up by the snouts of these biographers, photographers and royal correspondents?

Philosopher king

John Grigg

Nehru: A Tryst with Destiny
by Stanley Wolpert
Oxford 558pp £25

AT MIDNIGHT on 14-15 August 1947, India became independent, and in a famous address the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, said: "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially." The qualifying words referred to the tragic fact that independence was obtained only at the price of partition, made more tragic still by communal upheaval and bloodshed on a vast scale. Mahatma Gandhi, who was never reconciled to partition, absented himself from the ceremony, though many flowery tributes were paid to him as "father of the nation".

In his study of Nehru, the distinguished American scholar Stanley Wolpert (professor of Indian history at UCLA) has, like the subject, achieved his objective not wholly or in full measure, and in a sense even less substantially. Twenty-seven of the book's 32 chapters are devoted to the years when Nehru was a nationalist leader before independence, leaving only five chapters for a perfunctory account of his long reign — from 1947 until his death in 1964 — as leader of the nation and star figure on the world stage.



Nehru: 'I'm the last Englishman to rule India'

Nevertheless, any book about such a fascinating man, by an author of Wolpert's erudition, is bound to be worth reading, and in this case there is the other advantage that he has previously written a life of M A Jinnah, founder of Pakistan.

The personal antagonism that developed between the two was disastrous for the cause of a united India. Both were Westernised, and both were called to the Bar in London. But in both the dominant drive was towards politics. Jinnah — 13 years older than Nehru — was already active in the Indian national movement before 1914, at a time when his membership of Congress was quite compatible with membership of the Muslim League. In their Lucknow Pact of 1916, the two bodies joined in demanding self-government for India, while Congress accepted the principle of separate electorates and weightage for minorities, which was to become a bone of contention later. Gandhi started the process of estrangement, unwillingly but inexorably, by turning Congress into a mass organisation, which the élitist Jinnah could not stomach. In 1920 religion and communalism were not divisive factors.

Unfortunately, other things came between them. Nehru held very left-wing views. He was also a true democrat, convinced that independent India should, like Congress, be all-embracing. To Jinnah, Islam was little more than a culture and power base; yet he understood, as Nehru did not, the latent force of religious passion in India. When he and his League were spurned by Congress, in a triumphalist mood after the 1937 elections, he appealed to Muslim fears with devastating effect. Nehru made the fatal mistake of underrating his ambition no less than the intensity of feeling that he was able to exploit.

Wolpert is excellent on the politics of the period, and shows well how Nehru's political opinions evolved. His quintessential Englishness is rightly stressed. Brought up in one of the most Anglophile homes in India, he was sent to Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, and then lingered on in England before returning, after seven years' absence, to his native land. "I'm the last Englishman to rule India," he told J K Galbraith — a joke, no doubt, but kidding on the level.

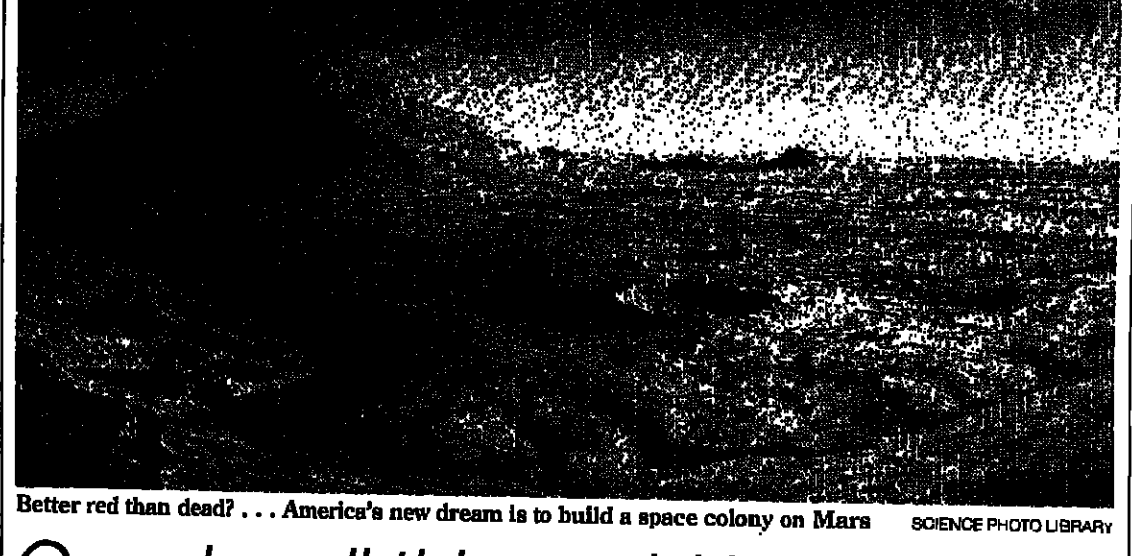
His attitude to Winston Churchill is a revelation in the book. It was already known that the two great Harrovian prime ministers of the century got on well in the 1950s, but Wolpert shows that Nehru admired Churchill much earlier, despite his being the arch-enemy of Indian nationalism.

The book would be half the length it is but for the author's extensive quotation from Nehru's Autobiography, from his prison diaries, and from letters to relations and associates. On the strength of Nehru's comment, after reading The Seven Pillars Of Wisdom, that he saw some similarities between himself and T E Lawrence, but more differences, Wolpert remarks that "whenever he lifted the veil that hid his true nature — his deepest secret self whose continued existence terrified him — he hastened to deny whatever he saw, closing his eyes to that most painful truth."

The implication is that Nehru was a closet homosexual. This is improbable. What we know of him suggests that there may well have been a homosexual streak in his nature, but that his inclinations were primarily heterosexual. Indeed, the affairs in his life about which Wolpert is explicit were all with women — for instance, Padmaja Naidu, Bharati Sarabhai, Clare Booth Luce and Edwina Mountbatten.

Nehru had many faults and made many mistakes, both personal and political. Yet he gave magnificent service to India and the cause of democracy in the world; and he wrote with a candour and charm that few, if any, of history's great men of action have matched. Wolpert has contributed to our understanding of him, above all by quoting his own words in such abundance.

This book is available at the special discount price of £20 from Books@The Guardian Weekly



Better red than dead? . . . America's new dream is to build a space colony on Mars SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

One day all this could be yours

Eric Korn

The Case for Mars: The Plan to Settle the Red Planet and Why We Must
by Robert Zubrin
(with Richard Wagner)
Simon and Schuster 328pp £15.99

IN A RARE moment of enthusiasm, George Bush called in 1989 for a Space Exploration Initiative. Nasa sketched space stations and shuttles, moon-rockets assembled chunk by rendezvousing chunk in orbit, a moon base for construction and launch of interplanetary craft to parking orbit round Mars; then a quick toe-in-the-sand for mankind, and home again, flag left waving in dust storm; lots of daring new technology that could not be tested before it was tried. The price: around \$450 billion, not beyond the wildest dreams of arms salesmen, but enough to give Congress a shock.

Robert Zubrin, a nuts-and-bolts engineer and consequently a wild idealist, had a better proposal, and has been elaborating and propagating "Mars Direct" ever since. Using cheap C-reg rockets and available technology, he has detailed plans and a budget for a scheme costing a measly \$30 billion, which would carry a crew of four to Mars with no orbital or lunar hanging about; give them decent quarters, a range of exploring vehicles and 18 months to run, balloon, dig and photograph; and best of all, provide a fully fuelled return ship ready and waiting.

The trick is to manufacture fuel on Mars. The atmosphere, less than a hundredth as dense as Earth's and mostly CO_2, is poor stuff for lungs but adequate for producing propellant. Launch a rocket with six tons of hydrogen, some simple machinery, and the Earth Return Vehicle; don't leave the Cape until it signals a full tank of methane-and-oxygen. Most of the chemical technology involved was old hat when gasometers walked the earth: with a bit of electrolysis thrown in, you can get the balance right ("optimise the reactant-ratio" in space-talk) and get water and carbon monoxide as useful byproducts.

Only then does the manned mission set off, carrying the habitation module ("the hab") and crew: two engineers and two biogeochemists — no pilots, padres or painters. Zubrin tells the story of Mars exploration up to and beyond the present, with skill, passion, and no sense of fair play. Nasa's projected big spacecraft is regularly called Battleship Galactica. Zubrin only grudgingly accepts that there might be public disapproval of his pet NIMF (Nuclear rocket using Indigenous Martian Fuel), which involves chucking a nuclear power plant at the planet.

Zubrin's (or Zubrin-Wagner's) writing is sometimes flat, and worse when flowery, but he can be lively about temperament clashes with colleagues: "I'm an optimist; he's a pessimist. I'm a romantic; he's an existentialist. My favourite movie is Casablanca; his Brazil."

It can be, must be done fast: if JFK had set 1980, not 1970, as the target, the moon landing wouldn't have happened. And an affordable steerage-class passage is essential if "Mars is ever to benefit from the dynamic energy of large numbers of immigrants motivated by personal choice, seeking to make their mark in a new world". It was the Frontier that made America great, and the end of it has caused xenophobia and all our social ills. So light out for the territory! Go Mars, young person!

A new New World is Zubrin's aim: from expedition to base, from base to colony, from colony to Republic. From habs and spacesuits to shirt-sleeve geodesic domes with workshops and kitchen gardens. Live off the land: use solar or geothermal power, make plastics from atmospheric CO_2, bricks and glass from the red sands, mine the poles for water, manufacture atmosphere. With temperature rising, soil forming, atmosphere growing denser and richer in oxygen, greenhouse effect developing and at some undetermined point becoming self-sustaining, the place is on the way to being "terraformed": just like home, with lots of space for pollution.

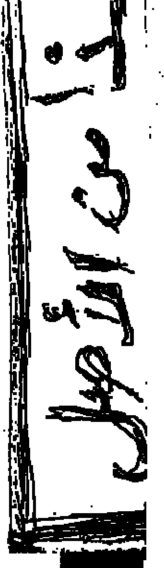
And the economics? Prospect for minerals in the asteroid belt. Extract deuterium, for the manufacture of heavy water, five times more abundant on Mars than on Earth. Finally there's real estate: "at an average value of \$10 per acre, Mars could be worth \$358 billion." Frontier ingenuity will provide exportable ideas, and the building of domes for immigrants would become "a major source of income for the colony".

This is the economics of Albanian pyramid selling, and made me dubious about all Zubrin's calculations. He's all for self-support, but there's no urgent need for ecology in a boundless universe. Consequently, we can go on biggering and biggering and buggering up the solar system and then on to the stars.

Personally, I yearn for those first on-the-spot photographs and samples as I yearned over pictures of Angkor Wat in the Children's Encyclopaedia, but the imperial dream to be the first to conquer Mars seems as irrelevant as a gourmet cookbook in a famine.

Yet the British, distributing £10 million or £20 million every week at the whim of a millennial finger, have no call to mock large ideas. If we were in the race, we'd be giving prizes for heroic failures, especially if they had to be expensively rescued. The Virgin Mars rocket nose-down in the Bahamas, Sir AlsoRan knocked out by space-belly 15 miles up, lone cosmoyachtsmen upended just beyond the moon.

How we would cheer!



Hunter of the deep

Mark Cocker

WHEN it comes to an English name for *Orcinus orca* it is truly Hobson's choice. While one can understand people rejecting killer whale on the grounds that it's outdated and morally incriminating, the alternative isn't much better. *Orca* derives from a Latin word meaning "inhabitant of the underworld" or "demon", and in early English it described "a devouring monster".

But perhaps we should also accept that such names are unavoidable. After all, orcas take prey up to the size of the great baleen whales. There are even stories of them co-operating with whaling vessels, helping to herd a group of humpbacks and then ripping out the victims' one-tonne tongues as payment for their services.

Just to prove they are at the top of the food chain they even eat their largest land-based rival, the polar bear, one orca sometimes tipping an iceberg so that the bear tumbles helplessly towards the jaws of an awaiting second. Almost everything else in the marine environment, right down to small fish, can be added to an orca's menu.

It's precisely for this reason that on the occasions I have seen them — at Sea Lion Island in the Falklands — their appearance has created an atmosphere of total panic. Gulls and terns rise above the whales' wake in a swirl of anxiety, while the breeding penguins torpedo for shore, often porpoising clear of the sea in sheer panic. A more amusing reaction is that of the fightless steamer ducks, which are endemic to this south Atlantic archipelago. Almost in defiance of their name, these heavy ducks hammer furiously with their useless wings and if they don't quite fly, then at least they manage to run across the water to safety.

No human observer can remain immune to such drama, especially if, as we did, you rise above a shallow sand ridge to find a bull orca only metres offshore. This male was part of a family group that regularly patrols Sea Lion Island in search of the elephant seals and seal lions breeding on its beaches. He swam in close, parallel to an inshore hem of swaying kelp, his colossal black dorsal fin rising two metres out the water.

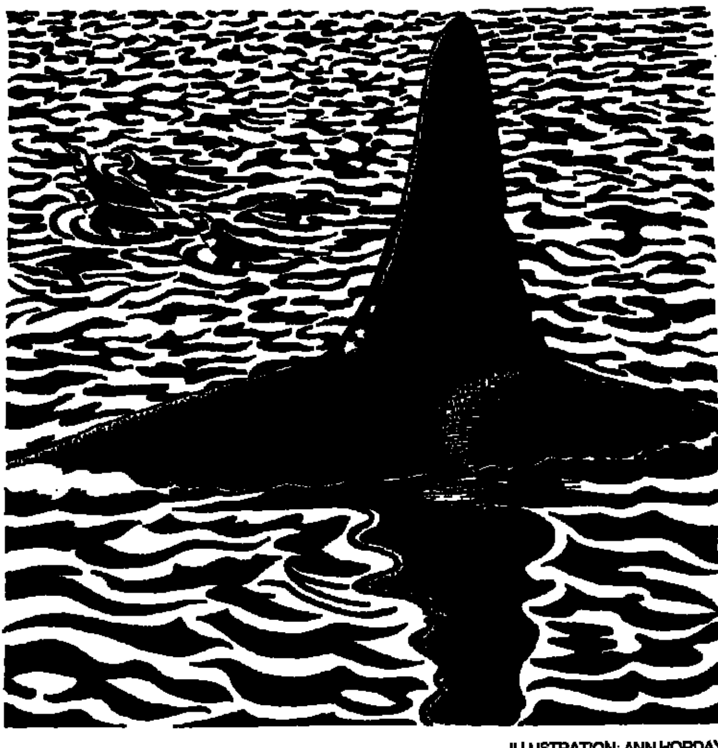


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

THE WHALE surfaced a dozen times and before vanishing around a distant headland gave us the briefest glimpse of his hunting prowess. Three unsuspecting penguins had surfaced momentarily then vanished in recognition of their imminent peril. As they did so, the orca submerged in apparent pursuit, which involved a 90-degree change of direction. For that five-tonne body to make such an adjustment of angle and momentum had involved the most colossal muscular effort. Yet at the surface all we could detect was a shallow sideways dip in the fin and a brief eddy at the whale's shoulder.

Later this sighting was made to seem rather paltry as locals recalled orcas at the very same spot, tearing into the beach at high speed, grabbing penguins off dry land and then tossing them in the air like bean bags. This is the kind of image to evoke the world's ultimate predator.

Curiously, however, there is one striking omission from the orca's list of species it preys upon, many authors insisting that there are no authenticated records of them taking humans without provocation. Some observers find comfort in this — a sort of fellowship between the planet's two biggest brains, human and cetacean. But since we have the blood of many millions of whales on our hands, the notion of mutual respect surely demeans the orca's intelligence, and I prefer another possibility. The orcas know we taste rotten.

Chess Leonard Barden

MICHAEL ADAMS bounced back from a poor Hastings when he defeated the Chilean champion Ivan Morovic 4½-1½ in a challenge match at Santiago. Adams's start of 0/3 at Hastings was blamed on the flu bug which made its annual visit to the congress, but the England No 2 said later that he only became ill after his three defeats.

Psychosomatic? Perhaps, but Adams did use one of the traditional remedies for a bad run by switching from his usual Caro-Kann to an offbeat defence to the Ruy Lopez.

He scored in 99 moves against the No 2 seed at Hastings, then much faster in his final game with Morovic. If Black's active system in this game becomes solid fashion, then opening theory will be revolutionised.

Morovic v Adams, 6th game

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 b5 6 Bb3 Bc5 7 c3 If White plays a quiet move, then Black's c5 bishop is well placed outside the central pawn chain. 7 Nxe5(Nxe5 8 d4) is critical.

d6 8 d4 Bb6 9 h3 Bb7 10 Re1 0-0 11 Be3 White avoids the more testing plan 11 Bg5 h6 12 Bh4 g5 13 Nxg5. Adams has judged the occasion well, with the white player demoralised by losing the match.

Na5 12 Bc2 Nc4 13 Bc1 d5! 14 b3 dxe4 15 Nxe5 Nxe5 16 dxe5 Nd7 17 Bf4 Qh4! 18 g3 If 18 Bg3 Qxg3 or 18 Qxd7 Qxf2+. **Qxh3 19 Bxe4 Bxe4 20 Rxe4 Nc5 21 Re2 Rad8 22 Resigns.** Apparently premature, but justified by 22 Rd2 Ne4 23 Rxd8 Bxf2 mate or 22 Nd2 Nd3 23 Be3 Nxe5 24 Bxb6 Nf3+!

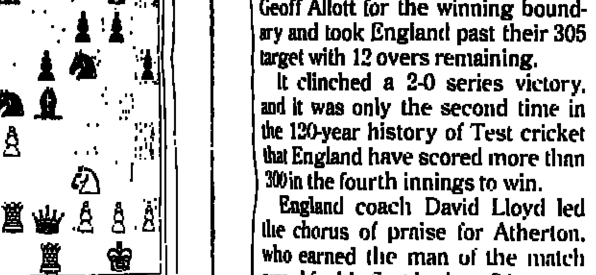
***Christmas chess*: Almost everybody got the last three, but *A*: 1 c5xb6 en passant defeated many solvers. Black's only legally possible last move was b7-b5, setting up the ep capture. 1 d7? fails to Bd6 2 d8Q+ Bb8. *B*: 1 Qg5 *C*: 1 Bxa2 *D*: 1 Nc3.**

This four-in-one problem is among more than 200 classics in Complete Mansfield 1911-30 by Barry Barnes, available at £8 from BCPS, Moor Lane, Brightstone, Isle of Wight PO30 4DL, UK.

There were 330 entries, of which 176 were correct. J J Ward, Spiddal, Co Galway, Ireland, wins £50 and a London chess set from Tournament Chess Supplies; G Whitehead, Westwoodside, Doncaster, £30 and a London set; I Renshaw, Penryn, Cornwall, £20 and a London set.

All entrants will be sent a free copy of the British Chess Magazine.

No 2460



Karpov v Petrosian, Tilburg 1982. White to move; how did he continue, and why did Karpov judge that White stands better? This unusual puzzle tests your strategic judgment: White has five favourable elements or themes in the position, and for full solution credit you need to define all five as well as work out Karpov's next two turns which clarified his advantage.

No 2459: 1 . . . Ra3+! 2 Kb4(2 Kb6 Ra2 and Bg4 wins) Ra7 wins after 3 Bf8 Rd7 or 3 Rxd2 Rxe7 4 b6 Kg6.

Quick crossword no. 354

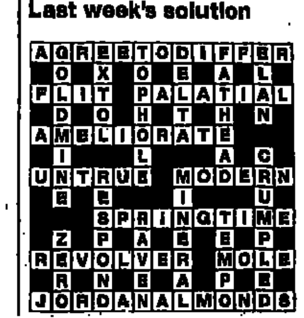
Across

1 Double entendre (9)
8 Discover (4)
9 Geographical dictionary (9)
10 Summit (4)
13 Snow-leopard — weight (5)
15 Slatted ventilation — for Paris museum? (6)
16 Village — play (6)
17 Varied collection — worn by a jester (6)
19 Standing (6)
20 Come to — a stretch of river (5)
21 Naked (4)
24 Rough — guerrilla (9)
25 Poisonous tree (4)
26 Balanced (9)

Down

2 Low — average (4)
3 Thought (4)
4 False (6)
5 Ditch (6)
6 Revolve (9)
7 Publicise (9)
11 Third most abundant element (9)
12 Guardian (9)
13 Command (5)
14 World (5)
18 Annual (6)
19 Indication of terror — how funny! (6)
22 Barely — deserved (4)
23 Motor-cab (4)

Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

HERE are the answers to problems 4 and 5 in last year's Christmas competition.

Problem 4

South	West	North	East
			1♥
?			

♠AKJ743 ♥A32 ♦AJ6 ♣4

Rank in order of preference: double; 1♠; 2♠

My answer: 2♠; 1♠; double. This is a very close decision. Two spades is a strong overcall in Acol, but this hand is close to being too strong even for that, and one might prefer a double followed by a bid in spades. But I would very much incline to devalue this hand because of my holding in hearts. When you have two or three small cards in the suit opened on your right, warning bells should sound, for that is the suit the opponents are going to lead, and this is likely to get them some tricks quickly. If the opening bid had been one club, then I would double, planning to bid spades later — a singleton in the opener's suit is a far better holding than Axx. But in the circumstances I think that the hand is not strong enough for double, which I therefore rank below both two spades and the simple one spade.

Problem 5

South	West	North	East
1♦	No	1♠	No
?			

♠5 ♥AJ82 ♦AQ1093 ♣A43

Rank in order of preference: 1NT; 2♦; 2♥.

My answer: 1NT; 2♦; 2♥. A number of readers commented that one should not rebid 1NT with a singleton in responder's suit. That is normally sound advice, but at bridge you have 35 possible bids that you can make and 635,013,559,600 hands that you can hold. It follows that quite a lot of the time you are going to have a hand for which there is no perfect call, and you will have to compromise as best you can, breaking a rule or two in the process. Here, you can describe the general nature of your hand best with 1NT — you have the right number of points and approximately the right distribution. If playing with a partner who would shoot me for having a singleton spade, I would prefer two diamonds to two hearts. While you are theoretically strong enough for a reverse, such a move is dangerous indeed with such threadbare hearts, a dead minimum hand and all the signs of a misfit present. Remember that since partner has responded one spade to one diamond, he will not have four hearts unless he has five spades (with 4-4 in the majors, he would have responded one heart). If he is 5-4 in the majors, he will rebid two hearts over your 1NT, which you can raise to three hearts if you're feeling lucky. If he doesn't have four hearts, you certainly don't want to be bidding two hearts at this point.

Congratulations to the winner of the £100 first prize, Henry Day from Durham. The two runners-up, winning £50 each, were Mrs E F Senior of Gwynedd, and Cathie Lachman who emailed her answer from Australia. The only trouble was that she forgot to include her address in the message. So if you're reading this, Cathie, please get in touch with us so that we can send you the prize. ©

Cricket Third Test

Atherton plays the hero

Mark Baldwin and Paul Weaver in Christchurch

MIKE ATHERTON was hugged by his team-mates after England fought their way to a famous four-wicket victory over New Zealand in the final Test at Lancaster Park on Tuesday.

The England captain's epic 118 at one stage looked like earning a comfortable win. But a mid-afternoon collapse to 231 for six, which included Atherton's wicket, meant that England eventually needed an unbroken 76-run stand between John Crawley and Dominic Cork to guide them home. Cork clipped Geoff Allott for the winning boundary and took England past their 305 target with 12 overs remaining.

It clinched a 2-0 series victory, and it was only the second time in the 120-year history of Test cricket that England have scored more than 300 in the fourth innings to win.

England coach David Lloyd led the chorus of praise for Atherton, who earned the man of the match award for his first innings 94 not out and his magnificent 11th Test century. Atherton was on the field for the first 408 overs of the match, which translated into 27 hours and 38 minutes of playing time.

"The strength of character of the man is amazing. He's come back after all he's had to put up with this winter . . . and the lack of runs early on. But we all said he'd do it and the proof is in the pudding," Lloyd said.



Match winner . . . Atherton on the way to his hundred at Lancaster Park PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE MASON

Crawley and Cork, who finished 40 and 39 not out respectively, both batted with calm assurance, hitting five boundaries apiece in a 144-minute stand which began amid huge tension but ended in carnival-like scenes of celebration.

Daniel Vettori, aged 18, a left arm spinner in his first Test, was the pick of the Kiwi bowlers with four for 97 from 57 overs. He was distraught afterwards that he had not earned his country victory, but he has a big future and played a significant part in a memorable contest.

On the opening day, Atherton won the toss and chose to bowl first. New Zealand got off to a convincing start and were 229 for five at close of play, Matthew Horne making 42 on his Test debut. Stephen Fleming top-scored with 62, and useful contributions from Adam Parore (59) and Chris Cairns (57) brought the home side's total to 346. Robert Croft, the Glamorgan off-spinner, was England's most successful bowler, with figures of five for 95.

In reply England were anything but convincing, losing their specialist batsmen at regular intervals on a benign pitch. Only Atherton offered any resistance as his partners came and went. On Sunday afternoon the skipper was finally left stranded on 94 as his side were bundled out ingloriously for a paltry 228.

The captain's example inspired his side and they had New Zealand fighting for survival themselves at the end of the third day, at 95 for six, with Croft and Tufnell going from strength to stranglehold. The home side were finally bowled out for 186, setting the tourists a victory target of 305. When the day ended, England were 118 for 2, with Atherton unbeaten on 65, and both sides in with a chance of victory.

Scores: New Zealand 346 (Croft 5 for 95) and 186; **England** 228 (Atherton 94 no) and 307-6 (Atherton 118, Vettori 4 for 97). **England won by four wickets**

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Chesterfield make history

SECOND Division Chesterfield sprang a major upset in the FA Cup when they sent their Premiership opponents and three-time finalists Nottingham Forest crashing out in the fifth round with the only goal of the match. It is the first time that Chesterfield have reached the last eight of the competition in the club's 131-year history.

Another Second Division team still on the Wembley trail are Wrexham, who defeated First Division Birmingham 3-1. The two Second Division sides have been drawn together, guaranteeing a semi-final place to a club from the lower leagues. Meanwhile Portsmouth, of the First Division, plundered three goals at Premiership club Leeds to dump them out of the cup 3-2.

Brazilian star Juninho got the only goal of the match against Manchester City to keep Middlesbrough's hopes alive in both cup competitions. Their next opponents will be Coventry or Derby.

Another side on course for a Wembley double are Wimbledon. They reached the quarter-finals by beating Queens Park Rangers 2-1. The Dons will now meet Sheffield Wednesday, who triumphed over Bradford courtesy of an own goal by Nicky Mohan.

At Filbert Street, Chelsea's Eddie Newton earned Leicester a 2-2 draw with a late own goal. The eventual winners will play Portsmouth.

In their delayed fourth-round cup tie, Coventry had keeper Steve Ogrizovic to thank after he saved a penalty from Blackburn's Chris Sutton to take his side into the fifth round for the first time since 1987. Tim Sherwood put Blackburn ahead after just 50 seconds but Eoin Jess equalised before Darren Huckerby struck to take Coventry through.

In the fourth round of the Scottish Cup, Rangers cantered past East Fife 3-0, Kilmarnock required a penalty kick to beat Second Division Clyde, Dunfermline went out 2-1 to Falkirk, and Raith Rovers defeated Brechin 2-1. Three other games ended in draws.

TENNIS star Greg Rusedski's gallant charge for glory in the Sybase Open at San Jose, California, came to a cruel end in the final against Pete Sampras when an injury forced Britain's No 2 to retire. On his way to the final the hard-hitting left-hander had defeated, among others, Michael Chang and Andre Agassi. He took the first set 6-3 off world No 1 Sampras but had to pull out at 0-4 in the second set.

CHRISTOPHER AUGUIN took 105 days, 20 hours and 31 minutes to sail single-handed around the world without a break to win the Vendée Globe race in his 60ft yacht Geodis. The French skipper took more than three days off the now-quadrennial race's previous best time set by his compatriot Titouan Lamazou in 1990.

BATH dismissed their director of rugby only three days after the Pilkington Cup defeat by Leicester. John Hall's departure, after months of inconsistent results which may leave the Rugby Union club without a trophy this season, follows that of the long-serving Brian Ashton, who resigned last month to coach Ireland.

SOUTH Africa's Rugby Football Union is to clamp down on the export of its leading players to other countries. Rian Oberholzer, the union's chief executive, said: "International Board regulation No 9 says that any player who wants to play outside his country has to be first released by his union. We will not be doing that from now on." Francois Pienaar, Joel Stransky and Steve Atherton are just three of the 1995 World Cup winning side who have recently moved to England.

HILARY LINDH gave the United States their first gold medal of the world skiing championships at Sestriere, Italy, when she won the women's downhill. It was Lindh's first success in any race since 1994. The 27-year-old, who had not finished in the top three in any World Cup event this season, produced a superb run of 1min 41.18sec, pipping Switzerland's Heidi Zurbriggen by 0.06sec, with Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg taking the bronze.

Renate Goetschl gave Austria their first gold of the championships in the combined event. Goetschl, who narrowly missed a medal at the last championships, clocked 3:3.38 to beat Olympic downhill champion Katja Seizinger of Germany.

Tom Stiansen won the men's slalom to claim a gold medal for Norway. The Scandinavians, with three gold and three silver, were the only side to better Italy in the final medals table.

Football results

FA CUP Fourth round Blackburn 1, Coventry 2.

Fifth round Birmingham 1, Wrexham 3. Bradford C 0, Sheff Wed 1; Chesterfield 1, Nottm Forest 0; Leeds 2, Portsmth 3; Leicester 2, Chelsea 2; Man City 0, Middlesbro 1; Wimbledon 2, QPR 1.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP Derby Co 1, West Ham 0; Tottenham 0, Arsenal 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Man Utd (played 25-points 50); 2, Liverpool (25-49); 3, Arsenal (26-48).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE First Division Bolton 2, Sheff Utd 2; Charlton 2, Barnsley 2; Grimsby 2, Huddersfld 2; Norwich 2, WBA 4; Oxford 3, Oldham 1; Port Vale 2, Ipswich 2; Southend 2, Stoke 1; Wolves 0, Crystal Pal 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Bolton (33-65); 2, Barnsley (31-55); 3, Wolves (32-55).

Second Division Bournemth 0, Burnley 0; Bristol R 3, Luton 2; Crewe 1, Walsall 0; Millwall 2, Rotherham 0; Notts Co 1, Blackpool 1; Peterboro 3, Bristol City 1; Plymouth 2, Bury 0; Preston 2, Wycombe 1; Stockport 3, Shrewsbry 1; York 2, Gillingham 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Brentford (30-56); 2, Luton (29-52); 3, Crewe (30-50).

Third Division Carlisle 2, Brighton 1; Darlington 2, Scunthorpe 0; Doncaster 1, Barnet 1; Fulham 1, Wigan 1; Hartlepool 1; Torquay 1; Hereford 1, Cardiff 1; Hull 2, Exeter 0; Leyton O 1, Cambridge 1; Mansfield 2, Lincoln 2; Rochdale 1, Northampton 1; Swansea 1, Scarboro 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Fulham (33-63); 2, Carlisle (31-62); 3, Wigan (31-60).

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP Fourth round Brechin 1, Raith 2; Clyde 0, Kilmarnk 1; Falkirk 2, Dunfirmline 1; Hearts 1, Dundee United 1; Hibernian 1, Celtic 1; Morton 2, Dundee 2; Motherwell 1, Hamilton 1; Rangers 3, East Fife 0.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE First Division Clydebank 0, St Mirren 1. **Leading positions:** 1, St Johnstn (26-57); 2, Dundee (26-44); 3, St Mirren (26-42).

Second Division Berwick 1, Queen Sth 1; Stenhousemuir 1, Ayr 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Ayr (25-57); Livingstn (24-49); 3, Hamilton (23-44).

Third Division Albion 0, Inverness 3; Cowdenbeath 1, Queens Pk 4; E Stirling 0, Forfar 3; Montrose 1, Arbroath 0; Ross Co 3, Alloa 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Inverness (24-53); 2, Ross Co (25-43); 3, Forfar (24-42).

Football World Cup

Italians fired by Zola power

David Lacey at Wembley

FOOTBALL returned home again last week, only this time there was no one in. A typically impish piece of opportunism by Gianfranco Zola, bolstered by routinely efficient Italian defending, sent England tumbling to their first defeat at Wembley in a World Cup match.

While not wrecking England's chances of reaching the 1998 tournament in France, this result could mean the difference between qualifying automatically as Group Two winners and facing a play-off as runners-up. England remain top on goal difference but the Italians have a game in hand, and the return match in Italy, on November 11, is already looking worryingly significant.

England, to a certain extent, have paid the price for Glenn Hoddle's learning process as national coach. Thrusting Matthew Le Tissier in for Gascoigne, unfit and not even on the bench, proved misguided. It was not so much the two chances Le Tissier missed in the first half as the obvious failure of the plan to use him and McManaman behind Shearer to disrupt Italy's close marking. If anything it made their task that much easier; Shearer was hardly allowed a glimpse of goal all night.

After an hour Le Tissier gave way to Ferdinand, whose international limitations were again exposed. Merson, for some the most obvious choice to play off Shearer, came on only for the last 15 minutes and gave a hint of what he might have achieved had he been used from the start.

In fairness England were always going to be handicapped by the loss of key players through injury. The unkindest blow was the loss of Seaman in goal. The selection of Ian Walker, who has been in patchy form this season, cast a depression over the proceedings even before the game began.

In the 19th minute the Tottenham keeper was left helpless by Zola's swerving shot inside the near post. Questions will always be asked when goalkeepers are beaten in this way but the greater fault surely lay in the defence's failure to close down Zola when a long ball from Costacurta arrived at his feet.

England achieved 12 shots to Italy's two and enjoyed a lot of possession in two-thirds of the field without exerting the sort of pressure needed to penetrate the blue thicket in their path. And the reason for this was simple: an overall lack of quality and imagination in passing, crossing and finishing.

Perhaps a draw was the most England were entitled to expect, given their casualties. The team showed seven changes from Georgia in November compared to Italy's one from their more recent victory over Northern Ireland.

● Scotland could only manage a goalless draw in their re-arranged match against Estonia in Monaco.